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THE COPPER QUEEN.

VOL. II.

THE COPPER QUEEN :

A Romance of To-day and Yesterday.

BY

BLANCHE ROOSEVELT,

AUTHOR OF

"LIFE AND REMINISCENCES OF GUSTAVE DORE," "LONGFELLOW'S HOME LIFE,"
"STAGE STRUCK," ETC.

"For time at last sets all things even,
And if we do but watch the hour,
There never yet was human power
Which could evade, if unforgiven,
The patient search, and vigil long,
Of him who treasures up a wrong."

MAZEPPO. Canto V. BYRON.

VOL. II.

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THE COPPER QUEEN.

CHAPTER I.

ENILDA soon found herself a queen in a small sovereignty. Her father had so well prepared the way for her reception, that Gotham's best opened its doors wide to the young stranger. Besides her reputed great wealth, she possessed beauty of so perfect a type, that in a land of pretty women it was still only the more remarkable. Her manners were a strange mixture of western frankness and acquired New York graciousness. There was a sweetness in her disposition, a simplicity in her deportment, which won all hearts. Heaven having given her beauty, the world accorded her wit; but in reality her intelligence was such, that after a conversation with her one forgot her appearance. There is no doubt that beauty is the magnet which draws

the steel, but it must lie in the superior underlying power of the magnet to hold that which it has drawn. There is also no doubt that superior personal charms may attract and hold men; but the age is progressive, and if the nineteenth-century woman, who lives, thinks, is of her time, add to beauty intelligence, she may laugh at fabled Castlemaines and their fabulous triumphs; to-day shall see as many. Man is not stronger, but woman is: although, truthfully, a woman need know no more, do no more, than be beautiful, and indubitably one was first attracted by Enilda's fair exterior. Beauty is the world's passport signed by the Master Ruler's own hand: all nations yield to its right-of-way, all countries bow to its charms, all history extols its virtues: even the microscope, contemporaneousness, cannot detect the mote in beauty's eye. The world's lens may be turned on individuals, on their spiritual attainments, their intellectual gifts, their moral and material achievements; the brutality of means shows in the detail of every-day life: we are permitted to extol or condemn, especially to discuss; but beauty is, or is not: it admits of no discussion. It is its own herald, its own reflector. It calls, commands, desires; all hasten to obey its voice, its will, even its unexpressed wish; hence Enilda's sovereignty was unquestioned. She took New York by storm, first by the picture,

then confirmed her triumphs by the picture's wondrous setting.

Perhaps in personal appearance you may see a thousand American girls like, but not one just like, her. She was tall, straight, supple, slender, and compactly built; youth easing every joint, she moved with the unconscious grace of a flower growing in the forest, or a lily floating on the water's-edge. Her face was a tender oval, lit up with eyes like lamps. They were of such extraordinary luminousness, that a bluish-white light seemed eternally reflecting back of their lids, hovering over the iris, as that indescribable light hovers over the blue grotto of famed Capri—in both cases adding to the beauty and blueness, as shadows steal over the firmament of the grotto, so shadows also steal over these miniature spheres; shadows thrown upon shadows by long, dark lashes, their penumbra emphasized by straight brows of a darker, subtler hue. These slender bands lifting above her eyes, like sentinels, seemed to guard them with a patrol of eternal melancholy; and beyond these sentinels, beyond this sad vigilance, they seemed powerless ever to escape. In vain the light cleared or deepened back of the blue-veined lids. It seemed as if a soul were beyond imprisoned, whose struggle would be ever mortal, but whose spirit was destined

some day to break into immortal song. Laughing or weary, glad or sorry, this look, or rather frontal physiognomy, never belied itself. It was a sort of nature's hall-mark which made Enilda's face different from every other woman, the soul which illumined, the mind which beautified the sanctuary. Her other features were beautiful, but not equally remarkable. Her nose would have been a perfect Greek, but was corrected at the brows by a slight indenture. Her mouth, not too small, had the short, curved upper lip which has nothing of the Anglo-Saxon, but everything of those old Norse goddesses, or the reminiscence of a purer Danish race. Her teeth were rows of pearl; her complexion, of a distinct pallor, was scarcely ever lighted by colour. Now and then a fleeting wave swept over and slightly tinged its surface, but this wave showed from underneath, only as the pink momentarily shows through the white cloud's lining. Her forehead was like the Fornarina's: a wreath of golden fair, not black, hair, rippled from the crown of her small head, and fell nearly to her feet. This hair was so fine that it could be twisted into the smallest knot, like those ancient webs which, although large enough to cover a princess's body, could easily be drawn through a signet-ring. These detail of form and feature, however, were not Enilda's chief beauty; they would

have been another woman's, here they were not auxiliaries, but accessories, and accessories of such material shape and suggestion that they were in utter contradiction to the spirituality of the upper part of her face; still, however much the heart spoke in one, the soul shone stronger in the other, and when the soul elects to shine, it puts out other lights, as the moon quenches other astrals, or the sun shames the flame of the waxen taper.

Enilda had often regretted her loneliness in those long days at Laramie. She little thought that solitude, to a naturally pure and reflective mind, is the greatest of all teachers, and that good books may often be better companions than men. Living at such a court her manners had shaped themselves from her occupations, as her face had borrowed its character from her mind. As debauch changes the virgin's look into that of the wanton, so one who thinks good and noble thoughts is bound with time to mould her features into an expression of goodness and nobility.

Thus it was that Enilda's combined graces spoke an universal tongue, and it is little wonder that a world's metropolis yielded her the palm for a beauty as spiritual as it was exceptional.

Her first pleasure had been in meeting her old friend Flora;—Flora, who was unchanged in affection, only

changed in appearance as a lovely bud expands into a beautiful blossom. Flora's laughing dark eyes, clear skin, and nut-brown hair, were a marked contrast to Enilda's more ethereal beauty. The girls were constantly together. Enilda had met Mrs. Chromo, in short, had been introduced to her set, and so multiple were amusements and distraction in Gotham, that days flew like hours and hours like seconds. Still she found that wealth and its attendant privileges was not all. Her whole soul was wrapped up in Claremont. After the excitement of the first few days had worn off, she began to feel the reaction of an existence whose corner-stone was hollowness, and whose structure was tinsel.

Every man she met she compared unfavourably with Claremont. She dreamt of him, thought of him, and when she was alone with her dear old nurse, spoke of him as women alone know how to speak of those they love. Her faith in him was so unbounded that she wrote him as her fancy dictated, without once ever waiting for answers to her letters. She had told him from the first of their removal to New York, of her father's accession to wealth, and of their changed prospects. At last, as weeks flew by and she received no response, her mind began to misgive her. She counted the days which must elapse for letters to go and come from England; she

looked out ships' arrivals and steamers' departures, in fact, the book of her life more resembled the pages of a merchantman's diary than a young lady's journal. The suspense finally began to tell upon her, to obscure the clearness of her eyes, to add a heavier shade of melancholy to her already shaded brow—and still no news came. None, none! What could it all mean?

She had determined, as soon as Claremont's letter should arrive, to tell her father all, and beg his consent to their union. This decision had been made the second morning of her arrival in New York, and so it was that she could meet him day after day without deceit in her heart. She only said to herself: "I have made up my mind to tell him everything," and after that one determination there was no wavering—no change. She really looked forward to the confidence, for to the innocent mind passive complicity seems as wicked as actual crime. Enilda loathed herself whilst she had a secret from her father; she took no pleasure in her life; and saw no beauty in her face. It seemed that the latter must betray her every time he looked into it, and she began to regard it as a mask still more deceitful than her soul. Perhaps it was; but it is the mask nature has given us all to hide our real selves. It is an unsolvable problem. Could we read our

neighbour's life in his face, who knows whether we would most love or loathe, most respect or most despise him ?

The day of probation finally ended. Seven weeks had passed since Claremont had left Laramie, when one morning Charlotte Corday put a letter into Enilda's hand. It had just come, and bore the English postmark.

The seal was quickly broken, and Enilda read eagerly; then her face changed—a wildness came into her eyes, the paper drifted from her hands to the floor, and she fell forward into Charlotte's arms.

“ Oh ! Charlotte, Charlotte !—my heart is broken ! I shall die ; I know I shall. He is married,—married to some one else, and I shall go on for ever loving him ! ”

Between tears and sobs Charlotte got at the truth. Claremont's letter was plain enough.

He wrote—

“ ENILDA,

“ There may have been in my lifetime a few instants when I was worthy of you, but they were very few. Accident brought me to your door, and design would have kept me ever at your side, but my destiny decreed otherwise. When I arrived in Laramie I was engaged to the Lady Mildred

Allison ; the telegram which called me back to England was from her companion. I arrived in London to find her at death's-door, from a carriage accident. It was her request that before she died we should be married. Don't refuse to read further. So—I married her, and this is being written you by a man who is trebly perjured ; for I love you with all my soul, all my life, all my being, and I have tied myself to another woman. I know you can only hate me for what I am writing you, but believe at least that I was honest while with you. As God is my judge, when I left you I determined to break off with my old engagement, to tell her fairly that I was bound heart and soul to another woman. Can you realize all that is meant by the word honour ? I was bound in honour to you but first to her. I was horrified, dazed, bewildered, to find her in such a state, and myself in such a situation. What more can I tell you ?—and yet the worst is to come. I yielded to fate, thinking blindly that it in time would help me ; but we never bind destiny to us except we first make it the accomplice to our ambition and then ally to our own strength : my wife has recovered,—strange irony of fatal illnesses ! Perhaps the superior power of mortal will overcame the suspicion of— I dare not say I am a victim, and yet—

“Good-bye, Enilda. You may never think of me

but with horror, I shall never think of you but with love; and I swear to you, should we meet even in years hence you will find me unchanged. This unchanging will not be an insult to your virtue, but a tribute to your memory. You are young, you will forget me, you may love a worthier man; but I am not young, I cannot forget you, and I could never love a worthier woman. Dare I ask one remembrance not hate? You once spoke of your mother, and said that she always prayed for you. I have no one now who bears towards me a holy relationship. When you invoke the prayers of your God, beg him to teach me patience. We shall meet again. Until then, farewell!

“JOHN CLAREMONT.”

That was all. Euilda passed the hours as has many another abandoned by the man she loves. After the first outbreak of sorrow, the first snapping of love’s chord, her heart’s tension seemed eased. It was the relief we feel when deaths are confirmed, funeral rites ended, and the grave has closed over mortals who, although best loved, have henceforward no more part in our daily lives. And yet she knew he was alive. In her anguish she could only mutter and moan:

“He is dead to me for ever,—dead! And I

loved him so. I still love him; I still love him!"

Charlotte Corday said nothing, but offered the silent sympathy which alone knows how to soothe. As the day wore on she heard a knock at the door. She disengaged her arms from Enilda's waist, and went quickly to open it, when the latter started up. "It is papa," she said; "leave us together, Charlotte. I—now is the time to tell him all."

"All! honey chile?"

"Yes!"

Enilda stood up with firmness. The door half-opened, a head peered in. It was Mr. Rozen's. "May I come in, dear?" he said; "I am lonesome. Why, I haven't seen my beauty all day. I've been thinking about her, but I'll venture to say she hasn't given even a thought to her deserted father."

As he spoke he entered the room softly, warily, with the assurance of one certain of a welcome. One glance at Enilda's face changed his own. "My God!" he cried, "what has happened?"—and he caught her in his arms.

She hid her face.

"Papa," she said, "I cannot look at you, but I must tell you something. Don't be angry; it's all over now." Then little by little, pillow'd on his strong breast, she told him the story of her life. For

was not all her life summed up in those last three months—those little months of which he knew nothing?

The story was long—day grew into twilight, and twilight filled the room with its myriads of misty shadows, still she talked on. Nothing was forgotten, no detail omitted; for there is an unconscious luxury in dwelling on sorrow that the old can never resist and the young unconsciously glide into. As she reached the end only her father gave evidence that he understood all. His face was stern and unbending as he put her from him and went towards the fatal letter which all this time had lain unheeded on the floor. Taking it up sternly he read it once—twice—thrice. He crushed it slowly in his hand, and was about to tear it, when a pleading look in Enilda's eyes stopped him.

"Yes; you are right. Such letters should not be destroyed. Keep it if you will, but out of my sight."

He handed it to her. As he did so an indescribable look came into his face.

"So," he said, "fate was not kind to him. It has been kinder to me, and always will be, for I not only make an ally of, but I meet destiny half-way. My love was stronger than his, Enilda, and mine shall never fail you whilst I live."

The days which followed were almost a blank.

Enilda ate, drank, slept; each day a repetition of the one gone by, each night a repetition of the one gone before. Waking and sleeping dreams were one slow torture; every sound in her ears was the name of the man she loved, and who had been faithless; his name was repeated on every breeze, his face in every man's face. In every book she but turned the pages and read—to his memory. Every word, every line said, "I love him, and he has married another woman." In vain she tried to put him out of her mind. Added to the horror of loving him, there was before her the ever-present thought that he was no longer hers; that she was thinking of another woman's husband. At last her health began to fail. The rose-tint never came now to her cheek; her eyes were still luminous, but with an unspoken sorrow which but added to their light. With all her grief Enilda could not fail to notice her father's tenderness. He seemed a thousand-fold more watchful than he had ever been; a thousand-fold kinder; a thousand-fold dearer. Claremont's name had never been spoken between them since that night, when her heart's chords had so suddenly snapped in the midst of singing love's eternal melody. She had put away his letter; but as the murderer returns to the spot where crime not only lured but possessed him, so Enilda re-read her cruel sentence, and

re-lived all its agonizing purport. This self-torture was fatal, but feminine. It is a question whether a true woman is happier in the reminiscence of pleasure or in the reminiscence of pain. There is to her an exquisite despair in absolute, irremediable misery, which man's best balanced medium of sadness never knows, and which the ordinary mortal, with ordinary joys and sorrows, never attains.

Although Enilda never voluntarily uncovered the tomb of her past, still if it ever happened that she did so, her father always seemed to know it.

One day, three weeks after the receipt of that fatal letter, Eric Rozen came suddenly up to his daughter.

“Enilda,” he said, “would you like to travel ? Would you like to go—to, to Europe ?”

“Europe ! Oh papa !” Her voice faltered, and her colour rose.

“Europe—not England,” he said. “I have some business on hand in Paris, which I may as well look after in person.”

“Oh papa !—yes, Paris ; I would love to see Paris. When can we go ?”

“To-morrow if you like.”

They started the next day.

That to-morrow had run into many. Enilda and her father, with her faithful Charlotte Corday,

had “done” the Continent, with the exception of London. For all its magnitude, Enilda could not help fearing that the first man she saw there would be Claremont. London is a world; but those who have never seen it cannot realize what a world. No matter where we have travelled, or what we have seen, grief makes us all more or less provincial.

They were days in the great metropolis, and did not meet him.

Enilda half-suspected her father of having laid a trap, as she did not see that business occupied him much in Paris. Still, as she had naturally a healthy and not a morbid spirit—new sights, new scenes, new contemplations, and the real wish to overcome herself, at least to appear cheerful, soon had the desired effect. Her father’s devotion became more evident than her lover’s desertion. She had not the heart to continue sad when he was gay; she had not the ingratitude, at her time of life, to dwell upon herself when she saw him, after all he had passed through, at his time of life, only thinking of her—perhaps sacrificing himself to her comfort. Days and weeks passed, and as Byron says:

“Oh Time ! the beautifier of the dead,
Adorner of the ruin, comforter,
And only healer, when the heart hath bled ;—
Time ! the corrector when our judgments err,
The test of truth, love—sole philosopher !”

Time, the great healer, gradually poured his balm into her soul. She travelled far and wide; she loitered in shadows where queens had walked with hearts far more troubled than hers had ever been; she gazed upon gleaming stars and glittering boulevards, on mighty monuments of nature and art; she stood in the dead city lying at the volcano's base, and realized that nature had healed even the scars of this her most gigantic wound. For Time has smoothed the proud columns dissevered by the earthquake's shock; grass grows in arbours whose vine was petrified in their hideous mould of lava flowers bloom where the wanton was overwhelmed in a living grave, and airy ferns shoot and play through the calcined limbs of the bondsman, now for ever freed.

In the Eternal City she walked where Trevi's waters murmur their ceaseless legend, and stood on mounds made of Cæsar's clay. Lifting her eyes in the pale light which streamed over the Amphitheatre, she seemed to see the ghostly line of imperial shadows slowly wending their way to haunts long since immortal: listening, she seemed to hear in the wild birds' unconscious treble those voices of the mighty past which float on and ever; which sing and re-sing their undying triumphs through the vast arches of Flavian's sublime monument. At

first mechanically, at last naturally, Enilda outlived her pain; and although the void remained in her life, gradually it moaned less from its emptiness. She killed hope, but could she kill memory? Ah, no! For her heart, like the Roman Forum whose stately precincts had resounded to god-like voices; like that temple was now filled but with broken columns, and the sad echo of syren songs: temple perhaps impervious to further shock, fallen, not abased, wreckage in all its helplessness but more unimpeachable witness to a hallowed past.

After four months of wandering, which to Enilda had seemed an eternity, they returned home. Gotham, with its busy world, was preparing to don its winter purple, and its fairest ermine was spread out for the feet of the heiress to walk upon. She took up the threads of her life as the weaver picks up the threads in his tapestry, and continued to spin it out in the unbroken web of commonplace, which social existence in this metropolis entails. She often thought of Claremont, but since her return from Europe had never re-read his letter. These self-communings were offerings to her love, and to his memory; the living flowers we strew on the graves of our dead; but they were hopeless remembrances destined to live only as long as lives the blossom which is detached from the

parent stem. She had nothing to feed her love upon but despair; and regrets to the young, although a facile, are not an all-sufficient, nourishment.

Flora found Enilda changed. She could not tell why, but still she found her changed. One day she abruptly said to her:

“My dear, you are prettier than ever, but too sad-looking. What a change since you first came to New York! I can’t understand it. Enilda, are—are you in love? Did you fall in love in Europe?”

Enilda laughed uneasily.

“My dear Flora, yes—no;—I fell in love with Europe.”

“Nonsense; I am serious;—what is it? Past—present—future—future-conditional?”

“Future-conditional.”

“Very well, dear: but he must have black eyes and hair; and, according to Schopenhauer, must be as short as you are tall, as homely as you are pretty, as ignorant as you are intelligent, and as obstinate as you are yielding.”

“My dear Flora!”

“I am in dead earnest. Professor Protoplasm has explained it all, and I shall follow the rule of contrast when I marry. There will probably be neither brilliancy nor daggers in my existence; but husband and I shall be able to talk art, philosophy, and

astronomy together. I shall set up an heir, and at the age of seven will take him to see Bunker Hill Monument, and G. W.'s cherry-tree; at ten to the circus; and—”

“ And—when will you send him to school, Flora ? ”

“ Never. His father and mother will know and have known enough to permit one of their branch the luxury of complete ignorance. He shall bring himself up and go through life as he chooses : I have said it, but you, Enilda, I am always rather afraid of you ; there is a blue melancholy that every now and then seems to make wax figures on your face. I expect something desperate of you one of these days. An infusion of hemlock in your afternoon tea ; some ratsbane in your scalloped oysters ; and, by way of new jewellery, a poisoned ring, or an animated Tommy-axe on finger or bosom to show that the age of Juliets and idiots is not wholly past. I believe you've been telling me stories ; that you've been in love and—and it didn't work. Act ; and look anything despairing you like, my love ; but not for a man. They're not worth it ; they're not worth, in husbands, anything beyond bread-and-butter existence, and paying one's bills ; in lovers, flowers and—flirtations : but don't let us talk about them. The opera season begins early, and you must go to every matinée with me : there is one on Saturday next. Do you

hear? They say Nilsson was a bare-footed peasant once."

"Do you believe it?"

"My dear, I believe everything I hear of opera-singers. It is of no importance whether she was a peasant and bare-footed, but it is of importance that she has talent, and knows how to sing, and isn't bare-footed now."

"Oh, she can do that fast enough: she can sing."

"How do you know?"

"Why—why she and Patti scarcely speak. Isn't that reason enough?"

"Naturally, that settles it."

"By the way, Flora, I haven't asked you about your voice. You remember in Chicago that—"

"My dear Enilda, I have learned to be an accomplished artist, and sing well with a slim voice; but in America, unless you yell and scream, and reflect gore in your eyes every time you take a high note, why, you are not supposed to have any talent: people don't insult you, but they don't cultivate you. Knowing myself that I am an exquisite and simple singer, I never fret over what Gotham thinks of me, but go on my winding way, mentioning everything but—music, unless in my own home. But the matinée? To-day is Monday: I have taken tickets, and invite myself to lunch with you at one sharp—and mind you

are ready. It's *Lucia*—and I want to hear every note. They say Nilsson lets her hair all down in one Act, and it is such a sight."

Flora kissed Enilda and ran away, and this was the nearest she had ever been to knowing the secret of the latter's life.

CHAPTER II.

MR. AND MRS. CHROMO AT BREAKFAST.

IT was just nine, and Mrs. Chromo was not yet down to breakfast. Adam Chromo stood in front of the fire, with one foot on the polished fender, his watch in his hand, and an anxious expression on his lined and care-experienced countenance.

“Not yet down,” he muttered; “and she knows the only thing I require of her—as early as this—is punctuality.” Then he left his position at the chimney, and stalked towards the window.

It was a cold but beautiful day. A first November frost had nipped the trees opposite, and covered Adam Chromo’s great panes of plate-glass with a finer fresco than any done by the old masters: a wonderful arabesque in white and silver ran up and down and round and about in forms of beauty unknown even to Edgar Poe, for frost-flowers no more repeat themselves than roses re-bloom once

they are withered. The warmth of the room had not as yet blighted one single bud. Lilies grew upon lilies, vines clambered upon vines, trees intertwined their branches with other trees, and fantastic wreaths of silver seemed floating in white laurels, ready at any moment to crown the Frost King, whose kingdom was as real as his shadow ephemeral.

Adam Chromo stared at his arabesques: "the only ones which haven't cost me a fortune," he thought; "but I hope they won't crack the glass—that was dear enough, heaven knows. Twenty minutes past nine!—this is inexcusable: I will have my breakfast; Lucy is going too far."

Then he went to a solemn patriarch whose bust was set in a chimney-panel, but whose body had never been set anywhere, he pressed his finger upon the lips of this effigy, and in an instant several footmen appeared.

"My breakfast at once," he said; "I cannot wait for Mrs. Chromo; and, Tristram, bring me the morning papers."

"Yes, sir; which ones?"

"All of them."

Tristram disappeared. There are only forty morning journals published in Gotham; but Mr. Chromo thought he would have a little look at all of them.

Tristram was his personal attendant, major-domo, factotum, and really head chamberlain of the Chromo household. He was not very happy at present, because there were palpable differences existing between his master and his master's wife. Things had been going wrong for some time; things which were not so difficult to say as to define; things which took place in the drawing-room, and were echoed, strange to say, in the kitchen. There were whispers of a separation, perhaps a divorce, and it had reached such a point that every word Mrs. Chromo said in private or at meals to Mr. Chromo was taken down at the instant of speaking by Mrs. Chromo's first maid, Zenobia, personal attendant, body-guard, legion-ess, and—well, as we are speaking of a kingdom where all the women are queens and some may vote, let us say, first lady-in-waiting to her Majesty, "sweet Mrs. Chromo." Tristram, for his master, was equally occupied. Every word addressed to Mrs. Chromo by Mr. Chromo in private, or at meals, was also taken down at the instant of speaking by the first-named attendant, Tristram.

Zenobia had learned shorthand in order to acquire a brevity of style; Tristram had composed a cipher of his own with special alphabet, reduced capitals, and subdued vowels. Besides, it was odd, but not

unusual, Mr. Chromo, being a man, some way said less than Mrs. Chromo, being a woman. All Zenobia's stenography and acquired art of saying much in a few words was nothing compared to Tristram's nature and natural habit of reducing much to little. There are such contrasts in the world. We often find them at Christ Church College, and quite as often in the servants' hall. This system had been going on now more than two months in the Chromo household; and there was some—not much—but some little excitement abroad, to know the meaning of these elaborate and precautionary steps.

Tristram brought the papers. Mrs. Chromo appeared with breakfast, followed by Zenobia, and Adam Chromo looked at his wife for a moment. Was there a little of sadness in his look? Perhaps. He addressed her:

“ You are late, Mrs. Chromo.”

Tristram, with pencil and tablet, wrote in cipher, “ You are late, Mrs. Chromo.”

“ I think I am a little,” responded Mrs. Chromo proudly.

Zenobia wrote in shorthand.

“ I think I am—but not much.” I may here say that Zenobia often gave her mistress's words exact, and as often changed them, but gave the exact meaning—vide above. Some minds are so original they

cannot even repeat what others have dictated and said without repeating what they think and would have said themselves, but—"circumstances gather no moss," to quote Mrs. Chromo.

"A little, Mrs. Chromo!—do you call twenty minutes a little? Why, breakfast is quite spoiled. The fish-balls are blue—the hash horrid—the muffins cold. Twenty minutes a little!—why, it's the third of an hour."

Writing by Zenobia and Tristram. Interruption by Mrs. Chromo.

"Yes; that's just what it is. I never do things by halves."

"Which means that you should have been ten minutes later, or twenty earlier; but there must be a reason for this. Are—are you not well? Some broiled ham, Matthew, with some fresh eggs, a baked potato, some salad, a little succotash, some buttered toast, and while you are about it, bring a few things here; let 'em stand around if you will, but be kind enough to do me the favour of bringing them. I am not hungry, but I may see something to tempt my appetite. By the way, there is a cold pie on the sideboard, and some anchovies; you may as well bring them along; and I will take some coffee, this chocolate is too sweet. Yes; well, my love—ah—ahem!"

Mr. Chromo frantically put a finger in his mouth. Mrs. Chromo looked anxious, Zenobia wrote, and Tristram was agonized between desire to write and desire to slap his master on the back. No wonder, "my love," indeed, such forgetfulness was enough to strangle a boa-constrictor.

"You were saying, Mr. Chromo—"

"Oh, nothing! A thread got into my throat. I was thinking that you were late perhaps because you—you were tired."

Mr. Chromo waved his hand towards the butter-dish as he spoke. "These waffles are cold," he added, then subsided.

As before-mentioned I may say here, each time that Zenobia wrote Tristram cIPHERED.

"Tired?—indeed I am; our meeting let out early for us—it was only three when I got home. Vexed questions sometimes find me awake with the dawn; but—I am not so tired as—give me some hot tea, Martin, this isn't fit for a tramp in Bellevue Hospital. As I was saying, it isn't because I am tired, but I—I am dispirited."

"Dispirited, in what way? How? Some pickles, please, Matthew. How, may I ask?"

"Oh you may ask, and I don't mind answering you, although I might as well publish it in the *New York Herald's* personal column. The fact is, with all

our money there are a few things I don't know. This wilful ignorance grieves me. Last night, for instance, Professor Protoplasm propounded problems provoking peculiarly profound portent. None could answer him; but I—I should have been able to. Are we not as rich as any one else in New York? I couldn't answer him. The fact is a bitter one, but—I have no Greek foundation."

Zenobia wrote.

"A Greek foundation; new fabric to make lace bonnets on."

Tristram held his pencil in air and awaited his master's words. He waited some minutes.

Adam Chromo lifted his eyebrows. The above damning observation was not so startling as unexpected. Cultured Boston would not have been so unprepared at ten A.M. No Beacon-Street merchant would have ever raised his eyebrows at such a remark, but New York gentlemen are different.

Mrs. Chromo continued :

"Why, I don't even know all about Homer."

"Well, I guess you know as much about him as anybody else—don't you?"

"Anybody else—that depends. Whom do you mean by anybody else? Do you know about him, Adam Chromo?"

"I know all I want to know about him. Matthew,

kindly give me some fried oysters, they might tempt my appetite."

"All you want to know about him ! I am ashamed, Mr. Chromo, to hear you, an enlightened glue-merchant, speak thus of that immortal but much-maligned old blind minstrel. All you know about anything or anybody is glue, and—what makes glue. Cause and effect; horses and glue. Why, if you had the Trojan steed here in person, he'd be cut up and boiled, labelled, and sold before nightfall. And to think that I have tied myself for life to a man with so little soul. Martin, give me some water-biscuits !"

"Tied for life, ah !—who knows, Mrs. Chromo ! Life is sometimes long, and sometimes short ; besides, there are other ways of getting rid of people."

"Ah, monster ! Would you murder ?"

"Would I murder ? Nonsense ! Of course I wouldn't—not a fly. I referred to—to—well, to the little scheme we had originally planned out. As I say, there are other ways of getting rid of people. I admit you, one is—these fried oysters go to the spot—one is—ahem !—the footstep of the great destroyer. For instance, I thought I should never get rid of my mother-in-law the late, but by me—not lamented Mrs. ——"

"Adam Chromo, this is disgraceful ; attack me

if you will, but allow the sacred bones of my family to repose in peace."

Mrs. Chromo sobbed. Zenobia handed her a pine-apple lace handkerchief; she wiped away a tear, and continued.

"One would think, sir, with one's poor mother dead and in her grave—"

"In her grave? Being dead where else should she be? You wouldn't have her in the parlour bay-window, would you? Since you've been to Europe you're filled with new-fangled frills; I suppose you've been ruminating on that continental idiot who starred even to Copenhagen with his wife's bones. Well, now I think of it, he wasn't such a fool after all. I'd do as much, only I— Matthew, some devilled kidneys."

"Enough, sir! This degrading conversation is only fit for your shop or your factory, or to be heard by the carcases of your diluted ex-thoroughbreds. Insult me if you will. I can defend myself. Insult my poor dear dead mother; I can still defend her memory; but don't insult history, for no one can defend it. Don't pass for a fool before your own household, and your own help! Oh, I can stand a great deal, but let me tell you, Adam Chromo, I am not thinning but fattening under your barbarity. Sir, it will freeze in August before you go starring in

Europe with my bones in any crystallized coffin ; your allusion to my probable demise was far away, but your meaning was very near. Martin, a glass of ice-water. Perhaps you don't think of the terribly unkind things, the awful things, you hint at and never say—and a man who hints, well—I have my opinion of him."

"And what is that opinion, Mrs. Chromo ?"

"Sir, I decline to tell you. I have been insulted, but I won't be cornered. The time has not yet come for me to say, or for you to hear, what I really think of you."

"The time has come for me to go to my office, if you will permit me to say it, and your ears will permit you to hear it."

"Office—ugh !" Mrs. Chromo shuddered.

"Well—why didn't you say it ? Lady Macbeth and her damned spot aren't a patchin' to you, Lucy. What about my office ? What about it ?"

"Adam Chromo, a time comes in the life of every married woman when the ties, and cares, and troubles, *and* worries, **AND** insults can no longer be borne, especially when these ties, and cares, and insults are the special result of her husband's wilful wiles. The last stone to break the cabman's neck is that word office. I said I would go on living, but how can I ?—how can I ? A lovely home, wealth, refinement, even

signed bas-reliefs scattered about, a look-out on the streets with a full view of my neighbours' front doors, so when not occupied in works of charity, philosophy, or art, I can not only see but recognize every human being—and God knows I have no curiosity—but without effort can recognize every man, woman, and child who knocks at my neighbours' doors; all these advantages of time, place, wealth, and circumstance, yet doomed—doomed, sir, never to look forth from my own plate-glass windows, never to breathe the air of heaven from a marble front like this—and why? Why? *Why*, because, sir, you have blotted the landscape of Gotham with your glue-carts. They pass and repass. If I forget myself for one instant and look out, ah ha!—follow my hand; there's one now. What is that painted, bedecked, yellow, circus-looking cart? Modelled after a Roman chariot indeed! I don't care if Nero went to heaven in just such a car, yours are only fit for Barnum's; and then Nero, all European as he was, hadn't tacked his name on to his cars in swinging signs with jumping eyes which made all Rome wink and tremble. But you have; the name, Adam Chromo, is universal. You have no honour, no sense of fitness; in short, Adam Chromo, you have no style. Most men who had made their money in glue would be ashamed of it; but you—you glory in it, you wallow in it, you revel

in it, and--and glue sticks to you. Yes, and so it will, as long as you stick to it. Why? Because everything is relative. I can't go to the Park in my finest turn-out but I run up against one of my own husband's carts."

"Yes, I have ordered them all to drive once daily in Central Park. The place is dull; my chariots light it up a bit. Besides, New York lives and breathes and has her being in that very park. Couldn't have a better advertisement than that individual drive."

"Oh, Adam Chromo, how low, how Boston-like, how commercial, have you fallen!—and with it all, you don't think so. How many times have I begged you to give up business? You have now twenty-five millions of dollars in six per cents. in a bureau-drawer up-stairs, besides other trifling bonds and railway stocks which don't count; still more, the million dollars of your life insurance, all you say to benefit me; but how am I to be benefited, especially by the latter, while you live, and things are to go on like this? We have no children."

"No, thank God!" He spoke in an undertone.

"Thank Him! Oh yes, but you'll have to thank Him a great deal louder than that, you heartless brute, if you ever expect Him to hear you. Besides, if I haven't any children, whose fault is that? Mine, perhaps—"

“No; Providence!”

“Ah, dear Providence! As that Frenchwoman said of liberty—what crimes are not laid at thy door? Chromo, be a man, and don’t save yourself at others’ expense; and those others—that I should live to say it of any native-born American!—those others, one God and one a woman,—a woman, and your own lawful wife! My fault, sir? Adam Chrono, I beg to remark that my mother had children.”

“Yes; so I perceive.”

“Sir, beware; you are treading on holy ground. But, I repeat, as we have no—no offspring, I repeat, all your wealth is for me. Well, I would rather take a quarter on account and call it square, and never see one of those vile carts again; to have you give up business, than to have all Vanderbilt’s dirty, but ready, money.”

“Mrs. Chromo, this is nonsense. Don’t—don’t excite yourself.”

But Mrs. Chromo continued:

“Adam, you took me from a happy home. You know my family, none is older in America; we came before, and with the ‘Mayflower.’ Are these considerations nothing? Is ancestry nothing? Is heraldry nothing? Can any coat-of-arms in America make a better show than ours? Are any monkeys, mushrooms, or eagles better designed? Could any re-

ligious principle be more fully put forth than in *Qualis artifex Spiro?* And don't I live up to it? Do I, sole inheritor of all these virtues, count for nothing in your jaundiced eyes? I married a man who could boast of none of these qualities when I married him, no matter what he can boast of now; a man who is proud to say that he sprung from nothing, and who has been keeping it up ever since—who has made his own way in life; and this he calls his American pride. I don't care a rap for American pride. Know, sir, that there is pride and pride; and I have never known in any country the varieties of pride that exist in this, or the gulfs which yawn between these varieties. Considering we are all Americans, these gulfs are not astonishing, but their width is. Take your pride and mine, for instance. Our ambitions are—are as far apart as the poles. Believe me, I am right. Men work for money in America for women to spend. But what do women in New York do in the mean time? They cultivate themselves, sir; they accomplish themselves, sir; they study up their ancestry and the British Peerage. Why, do you think my Bible, last edition, cost me as much as that smuggled but elegant book called 'The Ancestral Homes of Great Britain'? I repeat, women in New York pass their time in thought and reverie when not shopping

or eating ice-cream. They study how to forget the vulgar detail of money-making. They learn—they learn to hallow it—the money, not the cream."

"Yes; they study to forget the ways, but not the means. They acquire just enough to learn to abhor, to despise, and to insult their fathers, brothers, and husbands who toil to get money for them to spend. A woman here don't care if her husband gets ten years on Blackwell Island if she can only wear a silk dress of the latest cut, have bigger diamonds than the Regent, horses and a carriage with panels whose quarterings would shame the present Royal Family of England, and the latest frills for the Sunday Side-Show on Fifth Avenue. Have all these things, if you like; buy 'em, but don't insult the man and the money which pays for 'em. Don't insult the bridge which carries you over. Your bridge, Mrs. Chromo, like mine, is—"

"Glue!"

"Precisely."

"And you won't give it up; you still stick to it."

"No; it sticks to me, and I have not the smallest intention of reading any other man's name all over New York at the head of the unique business which is to my honour and to your advantage, but, alas! not to your taste. Matthew, I will smoke a two-dollar cigar this morning—one with my own

stamp on it—one, madam, made to present to customers of my house—one which will exhale a mild but ten-dollar odour in this very room.”

“ Adam, have mercy.”

Mrs. Chromo lifted her head, then seized the table-napkin, and put it to her mouth. A slender red filet soon stained its whiteness.

Zenobia sprang forward.

“ Sir,” she said sharply to Mr. Chromo, “ this is your work : Madame was ill last night. On the way to her classical meeting the carriage was run into by what ?—one of your carts, sir.”

“ My God ! this is horrible. Lucy.” He attempted to approach his wife, but she was well enough to wave him off. He sat down, vulgarly speaking, “ squelched.”

“ Speak, Zenobia,” she said ; “ not only have I burst a blood-vessel, but my heart is likewise ruptured.”

“ By one of your carts, sir. Madame was so upset.”

“ What !—the carriage ?” Mr. Chromo turned pale as he spoke. “ Why didn’t you mention it before ?”

“ Not the carriage, sir, but madame’s mind ; and when she got to the meeting held at Miss Grayson’s, she was morally wrecked. Her answers to great questions were lucid, but—but not brilliant. This morning, after a troubled night, madame went to the window for a little air, and just as she looked out

saw ten of the carts one after the other rolling leisurely along the Avenue. That was the last blow, sir. Madame threw up a coal-scuttle full of blood, and went back to bed."

"Oh, Lucy, Lucy, why did you not speak of this? Was it for this you were late to breakfast?"

"Yes; only this and nothing more; and, Adam, I fear it was arterial blood. But I am all right now. I shall soon be well if—if you will give up—"

"Mrs. Chromo, no more. Ask me anything but that. I cannot give up my business. We live on glue; besides, glue is our bread-and-butter."

"Sir, you may live on it, but I won't. I tell you plainly that in six months we shall be separated: this is the final word. I have spoken it; I give you that time in which to consider. Zenobia, your arm. Go to your office, sir; go to your vats and your boiling down of animals whose ghosts ought to, and probably do, haunt you! We shall not discuss the subject again unless—unless something brings it up in my mind. I shall not worry any more. God has given me uncommon resources. I have many friends, and a mind which comprehends the infinite. I never lack for suitable distractions. I may be a woman, but I shall never brood. I have a mind above all sordid considerations. I once loved you, however too much glue has not

cemented but rent asunder our future lives. I have tried to bring you to a sense of your position, to the debt you owe progress, and the rapid accumulation of enormous wealth. I have tried to show you that you are now—well, to put it plainly, above your business. Sir, I am still your wife, and shall not forget my wifely duties; but as to the word love, Adam Chromo, never expect to hear it from my lips again. That's all I've got to say. Good morning!"—and Lucy, leaning on Zenobia's arm, flaunted from the room, leaving Adam Chromo alone with a twenty-five-million-dollar smile on his lips, and an equally valuable cigar of its kind in his mouth.

CHAPTER III.

IT was four P.M. on an unusually fine day in November. New York was bustling, busy, noisy, and in a hurry. The city was alive with people, the omnibuses and street-cars clattered through every available avenue and lane, the air was filled with shrill voices, and the clamour of workmen building the elevated roads. Scaffolding and ladders hung from graceless buildings, and the long vista of streets seemed one perspective of wire cobweb: no heaven was in sight, only a canopy of iron, steel, wood, and brass frame-work.

Jean Arundel had been wandering aimlessly about the streets since early morning. He has altered much since we last saw him. Five years have deepened the lines in his forehead, have changed the pepper of his hair mostly to salt, have added a dual expression of querulousness and settled melancholy which clouded his face with a veil of invincible,

never-to-be lifted despair. He walked idly down Third Avenue, he crossed Broadway at Fourteenth Street, went to Fourth Avenue, then came back to Broadway. He was alternately swinging an old umbrella in his hand and stroking his long beard, which was not tucked in his coat as of old, but now, like Michel Angelo's Moses, rippled to his waist or floated freely in the brisk December wind. Jean heeded nothing and nobody. He muttered to himself or talked to himself, a habit of long standing, and one of which the future seemed very unlikely to cure him. He spoke sometimes loudly, sometimes softly, but went on and on with a certain step, although an uncertain gait. At Fourteenth Street he was jostled by the crowd, yelled at by policemen, was under horses' heads and over them, always pushing forward, always swinging his umbrella, and always talking to himself.

"I think I will go to the Aquarium," he said, fetching up abruptly at the corner of Union Square and Broadway; wherewith he hailed a passing up-town bus. It stopped. He started towards it, then he stopped again.

"Go on," he said abruptly to the driver, swinging his umbrella in that worthy's face. "Go on. I thought I would go to the Aquarium, but I have changed my mind."

“Go to the Aquarium!” waved the irritated Jehu : “you had better go to—”

Then followed the usual word, now called Sheol by those who respect energy, money, time, patience, and religious enterprise.

Jean smiled blandly, and waved his umbrella higher. It was as if the driver had invited him to go to heaven. He gaily crossed the street.

“I don’t see why I should go to the Aquarium,” he said ; “there’s neither water, fish, minerals, nor sea-weed there, only an empty tank and the carcase of a devil-fish caught in Boston Harbour, cured on Boston Common, combed at Cambridge, and tanned at Cape Cod. I think I will go to the Academy of Music and see the Nilsson opera crowd come out. Ah ! that’s an idea. If I wasn’t so poor I’d have gone to hear her sing—but alas ! alas ! Oh ! if I ever catch that villain—”

Then he raised his umbrella high in air and shook it, at the same time knocking off a man’s hat who was leisurely reading the Union Square Theatre bill. This man’s hands were in his pockets, his head was thrown back, and “Clara Morris” was on his lips.

In an instant the favourite actress’s name changed to an oath. It flew at Arundel with such heat that the air smelt of brimstone, and seemed cut by a rocket’s flight.

"I beg your pardon a thousand times," said Arundel hastily; "I—I was thinking of—of something."

The man looked at him in silence, then stooped and picked up his hat. Arundel went on bowing to right and left, and waved the umbrella gutterwards with an air of such elaborate apology that the object of so much zeal could not forbear addressing a passer-by:

"Mad as a March hare, I guess," he said. Then he clapt his hat on his head, turned again to his playbill, whilst Jean, still muttering to himself and still waving his umbrella, continued his course down Fourteenth Street. At last he turned into Irving Place and went towards the Academy of Music. He had judged aright; the matinée was just over. Crowds of lovely women were pouring from the door; a mob of men lined the steps and pavement, and a hundred carriages blocked the street; there was a yelling of footmen, and a general murmur of women's shrill chatter.

"Oh, isn't Nilsson sweet? Isn't she adorable? Did you ever hear such a voice? Did you ever see such clothes, such flowers, or such jewels? Isn't she beautiful? What eyes!—what hair!"

"And the tenor—Capoul is too perfect; they say he sleeps in rose-coloured flannel, and washes his

face in gruel for his complexion. Do you believe it? How tight he hugged her in the last act! Do you think it was real?" Then Arundel overheard a knot of men talking and a name pronounced that sent the blood tingling into his cheeks and stopped his heart's beating.

"Here she comes," said a fair man. "It's Vane and Co.; they call her 'The Copper Queen.' Her father's got money enough to line the Mammoth Cave. She's always with her friend, Flora Grayson. Vane——"

Arundel staggered forward. He addressed the speaker:

"I beg your pardon." He laid a hand on the latter's arm.

"My good fellow—gently; what is it? Don't paw me so."

"You spoke a name just now—a name that is familiar to me. You spoke of a Mr. Vane—I once had a friend named Vane. Is—is it his daughter they call The Copper Queen?"

Arundel's voice was husky and his lips trembled; the umbrella was still, so great was his emotion.

"My good man, you're crazy. No; that is Miss Enilda Rozen, the daughter of Vane's partner, Rozen; but—oh!—here she comes. Aside, please!"

He addressed the crowd liberally, and stepped towards Enilda hat in hand.

“ Dear Miss Rozen, can I be of any service ? How do you do, Miss Grayson ? ”

“ Oh, there you are, Baron—a thousand thanks,” said Enilda. “ Yes,—no. I don’t see Arnold—nor carriage—nor in fact anything but a crush.”

Flora was shaking hands with the Baron.

“ The Opera was too lovely,” continued Enilda. “ I always cry my eyes out when I see Clara Morris as Camilla ; and I have wept just as much over Nilsson in *La Traviata*. See”—she held up a morsel of lace—“ you could wring it.”

Arundel was leaning against the bill-board of the Academy. He never took his eyes from Enilda’s face ; they were gazing hungrily at her, and an unsatisfied look came into his own.

“ I don’t know why she should interest me,” he muttered ; “ she has nothing to do with him.” Still he went on looking, looking.

“ Wring it ? ” repeated the Baron ; “ allow me”—he jestingly attempted to take it from her ;—“ and you liked Christine ? I beg your pardon, she’s such an old friend. I always call her Christine ;—yes, *Traviata* not bad. I think her *Ophelia*, however, not alone the best thing she does, but the best thing done on the lyric stage.”

“My dear,” interrupted Flora, “I can’t come home with you. I have just remembered that I must make a call for mamma; besides, one other thing absolutely cannot be put off until to-morrow. You know the programme for the meeting; Lucy wo: ld never forgive me.”

Enilda demurred.

“My dearest Flora, what nonsense! I’ll take you anywhere you want to go.”

Flora was resolute.

“Good-bye, dear,” she said; “I am going to the printer’s; but you will see me to-morrow at luncheon, sure.” Then she kissed Enilda, shook hands with Baron de Marcie, and turned away.

The Baron chatted with Enilda. Was her carriage the very last? It seemed so; he surely hoped so. Finally, Arnold came up.

“To-morrow night week, Friday, Baron; don’t forget—my first ‘Small and Early’,” said Enilda. Then she bade him good-bye, smiled pleasantly, and her carriage drove off.

As soon as it was out of sight, Jean Arundel hurriedly went towards Broadway. He was about to get into a down-town bus, when a smart-looking individual came forward, followed by some attendant satellites. “Make way for His Excellency the Governor of New York,” they cried, “and leave a

seat;" then the smart individual afore-mentioned galloped into the vehicle.

"Well," said Arundel, testily, "he can't take up more than one seat at a time, can he?—and I guess there's two in the bus. If there ain't—"

But there were two seats, and Jean clambering in after the Governor, took possession of one, and was soon clattering down Broadway seated beside this republican monarch, whose linen was not a whit finer than his subjects'; whose watch-chain might be heavier, but the lines of whose brow were not lighter. Responsibility is the universal American facial expression. Children cultivate and take it in with their milk; pretty women wear it with their smiles; fathers, sons, husbands, and brothers put it on with their shirts, but, alas! do not take it off at night with their boots; the Broadway bus was a coup of carking worries, tired bodies, thin and anxious voices. In vain his Excellency took an evening paper from his pocket and tried to read; he soon put it back, and instead began to jot down figures on his shirt-cuffs. His nearest neighbour didn't even try to read them, he was more interested in his own improved flax tablets.

Arundel was busily employed thinking, ever thinking, upon one subject, and the name Vane was constantly running in his head. He read it under

actresses' photographs which decorated the bus's ceiling; he read it in soap advertisements on street-corners and street-crossings. Once only he lost sight of it. Some men were talking alternate mines, stocks, and yachts. He caught one clear sentence: "Ythan Florestan is the best fellow in New York, if I ever wanted a favour granted I would ask it of him."

Then the name Vane stopped running in Arundel's head. The wheels of memory went backwards. "Florestan," he muttered; "I have heard that name before, but where? where?—only now I shall not forget it." As he said this, a writing appeared before him in great gold letters. The bus had turned into another street. This time he was not dreaming; he rubbed his eyes, and looked again at the gilded sign; he looked and read the name that had become the waking and sleeping phantasm of his life. Then he jumped up wildly, pulled the check-rein, and in another moment was standing before the building which bore this magic sign. In another, he was talking to an oily-faced individual who was looking calmly at him from out a small enclosure.

"Mr. Vane. He's in Europe: rather difficult to get at to-day."

Arundel cried out in his despair: What, after

all these years had he found him only to lose him ?

“ You are not speaking the truth,” he said firmly : “ he is here—he will not see me.”

“ My good man,” said the oily-visaged youth, “ let up, can’t you ? He isn’t here, and probably wouldn’t see you if he were.” Then like the coquette in ‘ Beware,’ “ he gave a side glance and looked down.”

That look calmed yet exasperated Arundel.

“ And—and the Co.—his partners ? ” he queried.

“ The Co. ? Well, one part of it is Mr. Rozen ; you’d like to see him I suppose, but—”

“ But what ? ”

“ He’s gone to the up-town office. Left here at three.”

Arundel turned pale. “ When is he to be found here ? ” he asked. “ I will call again.”

“ You might catch him at lunch-time, but you’d better write and make an appointment.”

“ Write ! That is a good idea,” said Arundel. “ I will write to Mr. Rozen, then when I see him I will find out about Vane.” So he thanked his informant, and sadly walked away. As he left the office a happier thought seemed to strike him.

“ I will call at his private residence,” he said to himself. “ Who knows but I may see him to-day ? ”— and he went into a chemist’s to look in the Directory

for the address of a Mr. Rozen. After diligent search he found one—only one. His business address was that of Vane & Co.; his private number was up in the hundreds of Madison Avenue. Arundel got into another omnibus; nearing the corner of Union Square he caught sight of a clock, and to his astonishment found that it was nearly seven. Time had flown so quickly, he scarcely realized that it was so late, yet he saw twinkling lights already glimmering in the streets, and whilst he was yet looking about, night seemed to close in around him all at once, as mysteriously as the curtain of our eyelids drops over our eyes when we fall asleep.

Arundel was not to be daunted by the darkness. He called at Rozen's house. He was footsore, worn, and fainting. After waiting some time the door was opened; a polite footman informed him that Mr. Rozen had just gone to see one of his partners in Philadelphia, and would not be back to New York for two days. This last blow was too much; Arundel reeled, but turned away.

“Stop, sir,” said the footman; “you’re ill—come in. The master isn’t here, it’s true, but won’t you take a glass of wine? I’ll have it for you in a minute,—or maybe a cocktail would set you up better.”

Arundel shaded his eyes with his hands. Ill?—

was he ill ? Yes, undoubtedly. Somehow these latter days had been more wearing upon him than the last five years ; he must keep up his health and strength, otherwise, when the moment of revenge came, he would be dead, or worse than dead—mad perhaps, and shut up with other lunatics, to drag out a living death in dungeon and chains, whilst his betrayer lived in the purple and fine linen of successful vice.

The footman returned whilst he was reflecting.

“Here you are, sir ; fine old brandy, and a biscuit with it. I’ve brought it here because you didn’t look some way as if you could get into the dining-room ; but—won’t you come in now ?”

Arundel thanked him, and shook his head ; however, he took the glass in his trembling hand, and drained it to the bottom. The footman looked nervously about. No one was in sight ; and had there been any one it was so dark it would have been difficult to make out the peculiar performance taking place on a millionaire’s door-step, or to distinguish who the performers were.

No sooner had Arundel drank off the brandy than he started as if thrilled with electric fire.

“It is strange,” he muttered, rubbing his hands over his shabby vest ; “it is strange, but it has put new life into my veins. I swear now, here on this

very spot, never to relinquish my aim, whilst he and I both shall live."

Then his eyes burned with a fierce light. He handed back the empty glass, and lifted his umbrella towards heaven, while as his beard streamed out on the air, his whole presence became suddenly imbued with the majesty of a sacred vendetta. The footman started forward. "He's mad," he murmured; "as mad as a March hare—poor wretch!"

"No—no," said Arundel gaily, "not mad; no man was ever more sane. Thanks—thanks, my good fellow, I will call again;" and once more waving aloft his faithful umbrella he started down the stairs leading into the street.

Enilda had nearly reached home when she too remembered some trifling thing yet to be done that day. She turned back and went to a great Broadway store and was busy shopping when she ran up against Mrs. Chromo.

There were a thousand things to talk about;—the proposed meeting of the Chromo-Literary Club; a theatre party for the ensuing week; a supper at Delmonico's, and Enilda's own party for the following Friday. At last the ladies said good-bye, and Enilda found herself again on the way home.

There was some obstruction in the street, and looking out she found that they were in a, to her,

unknown Avenue. She saw few signs of life, but noticed a dark object sitting on the curbstone; she looked again, and to her horror saw that it was a little child crying pitifully. Hastily stopping her carriage she got out and ran towards him, Arnold following her closely. Enilda tried in vain to get the child to tell her what his name was, or where he lived.

“This is dreadful,” she said to Arnold. “I must take him home with me, and we will send immediately to notify the police. Poor child—poor child!—perhaps he has a mother, who is now frantically searching everywhere for him;” but at the word “mother” he stopped crying and looked upwards.

“Mother went up there,” he said, pointing to the sky, “and she don’t love little boys who cry. But I was lonesome. I was sick, and I came to find her. I am so unhappy. Papa loves Cyril, and grandma loves Cyril; but Cyril wants his own mamma.”

“Will you come with me?” said Enilda caressingly. “Cyril—so your name is Cyril? Will you come with me—and can’t you, won’t you, tell me the other name?”

“Will you take me to mamma?”

Enilda hesitated. “I will try and take you to your papa,” she said, “if you will only tell me your other name, and where you live.”

“No,” he said stoutly, but with a quivering of his baby mouth. “No; papa is busy, and I want my own mamma.”

How strange the street was so deserted! The child might have been carried off, and no one the wiser. Enilda exhausted all her power of persuasion, and was at her wits’ end to know what to do.

“I must take him by force,” she said. “Come, Arundel, and help me.” She was about to lift him, when he pointed a slow finger at the horses.

“Papa has two,” he said, “prettier than those, and my own pony is grey, and so high.” He stretched out the tiny hands about three feet from the ground.

“Ah!” Enilda breathed freer. Then she looked at his little petticoats, and saw that his dress was of velvet, and his linen as fine as her own. She realized that he was no poor man’s child, and began to run over the list of her acquaintances in her mind. Impossible;—she thought of no one who had children, and New York was a world.

“Cyril is cold,” he said shivering. “It is raining. He will come with the pretty lady.”

Enilda sighed thankfully. “Come then,” she said; “come quickly, and we will try and find papa.” Arnold went to take him up.

“No, no; you must carry me!” he said. “Cyril is cold and hungry;” then he clung to Enilda frantic-

ally. She lifted him in her strong young arms, and as she did so a nameless thrill shot through her heart, and a rush of blood flooded her cheek. What was it? Only the remembrance of a day that was dead, of forgotten vows, and of a lover who had been faithless.

Instinctively she pressed the child closer to her bosom, then she placed him in the carriage and got in herself. While the pain in her heart died away and the colour faded from her face, little Cyril moved forward and peered into her troubled eyes.

“I love you,” he said; “please take me home, and rock me in your arms now as my own mamma did.”

“Cyril,” she said, kissing him, “I will do all you wish,—only try and remember where your home is—and your name.”

“My name is Florestan,” he said proudly, “and I live in a great big, big house, higher than any other house in New York.”

“Florestan—Florestan.” Enilda repeated the name to herself again and again, yet it said nothing to her; however, she thought of a plan.

“Will you come home with me? I am going to dine out, and whilst I dress you shall have some cakes and sweets.”

“I want some bread and milk and candy.”

“Very well; bread and milk and candy you shall

have, then I will take you to your papa on my way to dinner—will that do?"

"Yes," he answered, and buried his head again in her gown.

When she reached home she set Arnold to looking in the directory for Mr. Florestan's address, and gave Cyril into Charlotte Corday's care. After informing her that she was black and he wasn't, he put his little hand in hers, and allowed himself to be taken to the dining-room.

Enilda was putting the finishing-touches to a hasty toilette when Charlotte burst into the room, and informed her that little Cyril was very ill.

"He has a fever, I am sure, honey chile; he's just lopped on to the sofa, and all the yarth won't budge 'im,—he's cryin' for you, and hasn't so much as looked at his candies; hyar the address—the only Florestan in New York."

Enilda seized the paper.

"I must go with him at once," she said; "send an excuse to Mrs. Chromo, and say that I will come to her later:" she read the street and number. "He lives miles from here," she added. "I oughtn't to keep dinner waiting, yet I must give this child into his father's own hands."

The carriage was waiting, the coachman looked anything but agreeable, and Arnold's face would not

have served Raphael for a model of any one of his Transfiguration saints. Enilda paid little attention to this, however, and merely giving her orders, drove off.

In a little while they reached an old-fashioned spacious mansion in West Tenth Street, built like a Roman palace, with square high front and a deep corniced roof; this house was set in a garden surrounded by a high wall, where mammoth trees grew as plenteous as in a Californian forest. There was a fountain in the heart of the garden; walks where hedges made deep-green shadows against the night's young darkness; an obscure rocky structure, some distance back of the house, looked like a natural grotto or ruin; vines clambered in and out of it; shelves and chambers, rustic benches, seemed to grow into the very rock; and like St. Peter's peopled colonnades here and there, at distant intervals, white statues, single and in groups, stood alone or held counsel with each other, wrapping white mantles around their silent limbs, and eternally stretching white fingers forth into the starry night.

Enilda could scarcely conceal her astonishment: here in the heart of New York to find such a residence, such a private domain. Then she remembered that this was the old aristocratic portion of the city, where the vaunted Knickerbockers used

to live, and still live to this day. She had never seen a Knickerbocker, to her knowledge; she had ideas as to what they looked like, and visions of Dutch Barons, Mein Hosts, Heinrich Hudson, and the whole of his never-dispersable crew, floated before her; continuing the ghostly reveries, the statues all appeared to take on life and descend from their tiles to walk with the other forms in the garden. She was as amazed as Hephaestus, when Pandora stepped from inanimate life into a creature of animate clay. As she went on thinking and looking at the now animated beings, the carriage, which had entered a carriage-walk, drove sharply up to a side entrance-door. A nameless thrill shot through her breast, and the strange indefinable sensation sent a new current through the stagnant waters of her soul.

Arnold rang, and after some moments the door opened. Cyril said nothing as Enilda took him from the carriage; he only moaned, and put out his little hand trying to find hers to clasp it in his own.

The servant who answered the summons stared at them in stupefied amazement. He looked like a man rudely awakened from his sleep, and did not venture a word until he saw the child.

“Master Cyril!” he gasped; “how on earth?—what does this mean?—you are not in your bed?”

Enilda explained all.

"Mr. Florestan has a dinner-party," the man said. "I—I will take Master Cyril to his room. I can't think what Letty means; or what she can have been about."

"Letty was asleep," said the child; "and Cyril wanted to walk out alone." He spoke sadly and faintly.

"Poor baby," said Enilda, "you are tired! I will leave you, now that you are safe at home."

"No, no; you mustn't go away—Cyril wants you."

During this conversation Enilda had been standing in a wide ante-chamber, but Cyril dragged her forward by the hand.

"Cyril is sick," he said; "he wants you to undress him and put him to bed; come up-stairs."

Enilda flushed. "It is very odd," she murmured; "children take such strange fancies into their heads."

The footman interrupted:

"Oh miss, if you only would. I—I dare not disturb my master, they're all at dinner;—twenty gentlemen."

Enilda rapidly took in the situation. She did not reflect upon her own position, but followed Cyril up-stairs, two long flights, and was shown into a large low room filled with a child's play-

things—horses, locomotives, swords, drums, and a whole series of stock from Southdowns to zebra, and that peopled ark which never has failed toy-reproduction since a man and a dove first celebrated it—alas! this one a pitiful wreck, leaning sad and lop-sided against the chimney.

Enilda went forward. The room was in semi-darkness. She turned up the gas. No Letty was in sight. She sighed, but cheerfully assumed responsibilities.

“Now, Cyril,” she said, “will you let me put you to bed?”

Then she turned and spoke severely in an undertone to the footman who stood in the doorway, large-eyed and casting anxious glances about him.

“I think he is more tired than ill. Say nothing to Mr. Florestan; only don’t imagine that such terrible carelessness could be unknown a second time. Go to your duties. I will watch with him till he sleeps. Send my carriage home, and tell my coachman to send back the first brougham he finds in the street to wait for me here. Don’t trouble to let me out; I shall find my way down-stairs. If you find his nurse send her here at once.”

The man hurriedly explained that Master Cyril’s grandmother had left him only two days before; that he was never alone; that usually he slept in his

father's room, but that Mr. Florestan had not seen him to-day; that Letty never lost sight of him for a moment; only there had been so much on hand this day of all others;—the dinner-party, and—and speaking of dinner—could he bring her anything? etc. etc.

But Enilda had taken some refreshment at home, and cared for nothing, so he finally disappeared, and she was alone in the room with the little boy.

She did not quite like his looks. There was the expression of a hunted animal in his large lovely eyes which went to her heart. Enilda knew very little about children; but like every true woman, she had the natural maternal instinct, and everything she did for them seemed done with a practised hand. She had thrown off her wraps, and was a strange vision as she flitted about the room—her dress a cloud of white, diamonds glowing on her throat and arms. By some strange chance she had put on the lace frock her father had given her—the one she had worn at their first dinner in the new home. It robed her now, as then, in beauty, and its priceless folds trailed silently after her as she went back and forth in the chamber.

Cyril eyed her with eminent satisfaction.

“I like to look at you, pretty lady,” he cried. “I wish you were my mamma!”

She smiled at this and said nothing, only put away his little garments and his shoes which he had kicked half-heartedly under the couch. She went to put him to bed, when he stopped her suddenly.

“Cyril hasn’t said his prayers.” Then he fell on his knees before her, clasping his little hands, and looking full into her face and began:

“God bless papa, and mamma in heaven, and grandma, and Cyril, and make him a good boy; and Letty;—no, Cyril won’t pray for Letty; she’s a wicked thing.”

“Cyril, dear, that is the very reason then you must pray for her!”

He was obdurate. “No,” he said, “Cyril won’t pray for her; he leaves her name out; but he will pray for you. What is your name?”

“Enilda.”

“What’s the other name?”

“Rozen;—Enilda Rozen.”

“Is that your father’s name too?”

“Yes; that is my father’s name too.”

“I will pray for him. I like your name, and your father’s name.” Then he began again:

“God bless—”

But his mind began to wander. He sighed profoundly and said:

“Cyril is tired. God knows all the rest.” Then

Enilda kissed him and raised him tenderly, and went again to put him to bed.

“No,” he said; “Cyril wants to be rocked to sleep; he’s hot; he don’t want his ‘nighty’ on.” Then he tore petulantly at his little night-gown. “Cyril is thirsty,” he continued; “he wants some water.” Enilda gave him some water, turned the gas lower, and patiently took him up in her arms. He tried one side, then the other, and finally determined on lying across her lap; this position satisfied him but a moment. He seemed suddenly struck with her bracelets. “Cyril wants to put them on,” he said; and playfully snatched at them. She was beginning to get worried and to lose patience, but it was no use, the bracelets he would have. Finally he lay down on her right shoulder and put one arm half-round her neck, but the bracelets at once slipped to her dress; he paid no attention, only nestled closer to her.

“At last,” she thought, “he is going to sleep.”

She moved a little so that the light would not fall upon his eyes, and began rocking him slowly and tenderly, crooning a little song that her own mother crooned and sung to her in the days of long ago.

Strange to say, Enilda thought not of her present, but of her past; of the days when she was rocked to sleep on her mother’s knee; of her death, of their wanderings from pillar to post in Chicago, and of

the Well-born Seminary ! She thought of Flora and the little grey kitten that jumped on the piano to pick out the keys that hopped up when Flora played the march to Massinaello ; then she went on and on in reverie until she seemed again a girl flying with others before the leviathan of fire which swept the city in its whirlwinds of flame. Cyril slept, but his breathing was heavy and his skin hot. She could feel his body and limbs like fire-brands scorching through the light tissue of her gown.

“ I will put him down in a moment,” she thought. “ It is strange no one comes to disturb us. I am afraid he is ill ; children, they say, have an extraordinary amount of heat in their bodies ; still—” Then she looked at him again. His face was flushed, but not unnaturally ; long lashes swept the tinted cheeks, and the rose-bud lips were half-opened ; the tiny neck a slender waxen column, so slight, so frail, that it seemed scarce strong enough to support the curly head lying so tired on her bosom. “ I will put him in his bed in an instant,” she murmured. Then she rocked softly back and forth again, and went on with her musing.

As we often dream, awaken, fall asleep again, and take up the thread of our dream where consciousness broke it off, so Enilda, taking her old position, insensibly dropped into the old reverie.

She saw the hurrying feet, and heard the roar of the flames, her father's arrival—and then she was back in Laramie. The sun was setting, and she saw a figure brought on a stretcher along the garden-walk, a man with ashen features was lying on this stretcher. His eyes were closed, and he seemed dead;—but it was not death. In another instant the moonlight swept over the valley, the evening wind stirred the trees; the waving roses and jessamine fanned a new fragrance into the air. A voice whispered “Enilda!” then a real voice sounded in her ears, and a man stood before her.

“How dark it is!” it said. “I couldn't stand it any longer, Letty. I haven't seen my boy all day. Oh, is he asleep? Never mind,” he went quickly and turned up the gas, then came towards her. “I must give him one kiss”—but he stopped suddenly as if petrified. He staggered at the picture before him—a woman of dazzling beauty holding in her arms a sleeping child.

“Not Letty!” he gasped! “Am I dreaming?” Then he put his hand helplessly to his forehead, and stared at Enilda. She placed her finger to her lips, but otherwise made no movement.

“Sh—sh!” she murmured; “he has just fallen asleep; if you kiss him you may wake him up. I suppose you are his father, Mr. Florestan?”

CHAPTER IV.

YTHAN FLORESTAN was in his thirtieth year—tall, well-built, and handsome; men envied, and women adored him. His forehead, broad and intellectual, was crowned by hair of a rich brown. His eyes, a deep, soft grey, were shadowed by straight black brows, and shaded by long equally black lashes: frank eyes which looked you straight in the face—eyes to be loved, to be trusted, perhaps feared, certainly not forgotten. His mouth with its firm but sensitive upper-lip, half-hidden by a long fair moustache, bespoke character and humour; the whole face stamped with loyalty—a face to be trusted.

Male Gotham adored him, and female Gotham made love to him, but he made love to no one. He was one of the best matches in the city, and knew that he had but to choose to be accepted. Still, to tell the truth, until he had seen the beautiful

Copper Queen, the idea of re-marrying had never entered his head ; at last, however, he was in love. Since that night he had seen Enilda Rozen holding his sleeping child in her arms he had before him but one picture. The low, toy-belittered room, a beautiful fair woman, and his baby Cyril slumbering on her breast. He had heard the story of how the child had ran away, and been brought back home ; he had exhausted himself in expressions of gratitude towards Enilda, and had immediately sought her father's acquaintance. As yet he had not had the good fortune to meet him, but his introduction to the daughter—that he could never forget.

He learned that they had mutual friends. In fact, that same evening Florestan was going to Mrs. Chromo's. Their second meeting was curious. Mrs. Chromo brought Florestan up to Enilda and presented him. Then there was a little laugh, and Mrs. Chromo was told the whole story. The whole?—no ; not quite. Florestan was about to say how he had first seen Enilda, but he stopped suddenly. When Mrs. Chromo turned to speak to another guest Enilda thanked him by a look.

“That shall be a secret between us,” the look said, and he nodded lightly in the affirmative.

After that Florestan was happier ! Fate threw them so much together, that he met Enilda con-

stantly. He could scarcely realize that she had been in New York even a day and he had not known her.

Ythan Florestan was what is called in Gotham "a man about town." He had been a great deal in society before his wife's death, but as he since had abandoned it, it was not strange he had not met Enilda Rozen.

His married life had been brief. At the wish of his parents, he had married the daughter of an old friend, a young girl whose satchel of books he had often carried home from the public school; whose skates he had fastened on at the rink, at whose feet he had laid the trophies of various cotillions, and on whose finger, from pure friendship, he had placed a wedding-ring. Only when married did he realize that respect for one's wife is not love, that friendship is not love, that affection is not love. That which had been delightful in a school-companion was uninteresting in a life-companion. He never let his wife know that he had made a mistake, and when little Cyril was born, the passion he had dreamed of for her was quickly and proudly bestowed on her son. Two years and a half later she left him, and was laid to her eternal rest. His grief was more than he had ever imagined it could be. His mother took care of Cyril, but in his own house, for at first he would not allow the boy a moment from his sight.

Then time with its healing wand gradually seared over the wound and accustomed Florestan to his loss; to the empty chair at the table; to the darkened boudoir and the closed cabinets. A year and a half had now elapsed since Mrs. Florestan's death; he had begun going in the world, but only to old familiar friends.

He went now and then to the theatre, always to the Opera, and the rest of his time was spent in Wall Street—Wall Street and its vicinity, the world where fortunes are made and lost in an hour; whose confines look like the narrow confines of Pompeii; whose streets are filled with swarms of men like army-ants running in the same direction; whose atmosphere is gold; whose high-pressure existence is the only oxygen breathed after nine A. M.; whose pulse beats to the pulse of mercenary demagogues, whose voices are those yards of white paper running in replica by the mile, out of wise but oftener infernal machines; silently repeating talismanic numerals and letters, which strip the rich man of his yesterday's purple, to clothe the beggar in to-day's fine linen.

Florestan had followed the New York current, and had once given himself up to money-making; after long and arduous work he found himself with a clear income of fifty thousand a year.

“I am tired of America,” he had said to his wife. “I am tired of making money, and of the din of Wall Street, let us go to Europe for a little while or for a long while, whatever you like; but let us go.”

“Ythan,” she said, “you must be crazy. Go to Europe now, just when I have money to spend here and take my position, and show New York what I can do? *Never.*”

“That settles it,” he said; “but at least I won’t work. I will do nothing for a while;” and Wall Street saw no more of him for many days. A man in New York is ashamed to do nothing. Idleness in America is a sort of stain—an ignominy. In speaking of a man one never says, “Who is he? What is his family?” but—“What does he do?”

The example of other men going to their places of business, the daily constant meetings, the question to be answered, the excuse to be made, the habit of excessive work suddenly thrown off, and its attendant irritating lassitude, the having nothing to do, absolutely drove Florestan, as it has many a man, back into his old haunts. The influence of an entire population which works, soon had its effect on one born an American, and consequently a working man.

Mrs. Florestan stayed to enjoy her position; and

after a few weeks her husband was back in Wall Street. The speculation epidemic was too strong for him. He took the fever; was down in the city at half-past nine; at twelve, he was yelling with other men in the great Stock Exchange; at one, he was snatching food standing at Delmonico's downtown restaurant; at two, he had meetings; at three, railway syndicates; at four, mines to be discussed, and at five, more meetings. He began to drink cock-tails at half-past five; he drank one with every man he met till dinner-time; then, to please his wife, after dinner he began the social existence—theatres, parties, suppers, etc. etc.

In two weeks he had reduced his income by a third; in ten, by two-thirds; and in five months he was thinking of mortgaging his property to get ready-money. Then, not only his wife, but his father died, and he stepped into another fortune, with the house in Tenth Street, where he had been born and had spent his early life. Florestan kept out of Wall Street long enough for his bad luck to turn, then he went back again. Chance favoured him; his fortune was soon nearly equal to its old figure. He would have kept on for ever this way, but one day he began to think of the past, and realized that he was following in his old footsteps. He began to see that the passion of money-making was none other than

the passion of the gambler who risks everything on the hazard of the die; his mines and railways and stocks were only other names for the green cloth. One day he lost heavily, and remembered the morning he had asked his wife to go with him to Europe. "This last loss decides me," he said; "I have done with Wall Street for ever." He left off stock speculation; but it required the same effort of will as the drunkard's leaving off brandy, or the opium eater's breaking away from the charm of opium.

He began to occupy himself with other things; set up a yacht; became President of the New York Yacht Club, and even went so far as to occupy himself with local and municipal affairs. He cured himself of Wall Street by these antidotes. An American may break off any habit as long as he is occupied with work of some kind—but work he must. After a short time he can easily persuade himself that the pursuit he has taken up is as good, perhaps better, than the one he has abandoned. Florestan was filled as soon with cares as he had been previously engrossed by the slaving exigencies of the former. He was deep in these pursuits and occupations when he met Enilda Rozen.

For the first time in his life he had fallen irretrievably in love. He thought of nothing but her—"the inexpressible she." He could only go where

she went; only go where she had been; only want to go where she was likely to go; only live from day to day in the hope of seeing her.

How had she come thus completely into his life? Alas! he never could tell. He would break any engagement if he thought he could not see or be near her. In an instant his whole existence was changed: Mrs. Chromo could not get over it. Florestan, once before so rare, was now as everyday as the rose-geraniums in her back parlour. She had but to say:

“Mr. Florestan, there is a theatre party on for to-night; a few friends—Miss Rozen—”

And before she had finished Ythan Florestan was thanking her and accepting with the greatest pleasure. She had procured him invitations when he might meet her always without knowing it; but when fate wishes to throw two people together, the population of any metropolis, no matter how great, seems individually employed in providing ways and means to help them to come together. Now that Florestan had heard Enilda’s name once, he never seemed to hear any other name than hers, and never to run across a human being who did not know her.

One week only had passed since that memorable night, and he was now so much her slave that he could only count time by the hours when they were to meet. He would say to himself, “At such a time

I shall see her," and until that moment arrived his day was a blank.

On this morning he was particularly happy, for he held in his hand a little note written the day before, inviting him to her first party.

"They call them 'Small and Early,' she wrote; "but that does not mean that we shall not be numerous and 'very late.' I am sorry Cyril cannot come. What a blessing he was only tired, not ill, on that evening! I shall never get over my worry and fright. Papa says at last he shall have the pleasure of making your acquaintance. You may come as early as ten—earlier if you like.

"Yours most cordially,

"ENILDA ROZEN."

How had the day passed? He scarcely knew, and when evening came he put on no less than ten white chokers before one was tied to suit him. His valet perfumed his handkerchief with white rose. He smelt of it. "Take it away," he said brusquely; "white rose is too strong; give—give me something more delicate;" and he finally chose some white jessamine, not because of its odour, but because he remembered the lines of a poem which had always gone to his heart, one verse beginning—

"Oh, the faint sweet smell of that jessamine flower!"

At last ten o'clock came, and he ventured to think of starting. He had dined at home because he felt himself absolutely incapable of talking to any one he had ever known; of asking, answering, or even discussing the simplest question of the day.

Cyril came for his usual good-night kiss before he was to be put to bed. He presented his papa with a button-hole bouquet. It was a lovely white rose with the faintest pink flush in its centre, half hidden in its leaves, and surrounded by sprays of fine fern.

"I know, papa," he said; "it's for you now, then afterwards you must give it to the pretty lady with my love, and kiss her for me. Kiss Enilda for me."

Florestan started. Was Cyril a sorcerer?

"Cyril, child," he said abruptly, taking the flower, "why do you say that? What makes you think I am going to see the—the pretty lady?"

"Because, papa, Walter said so." Walter was Florestan's valet. "And, besides, I think you—you see her every day, because you look so happy now. I am glad; I love her. Do you love her too, papa?"

"Nonsense, Cyril. You talk too much—good night; you must run away, I want to smoke." So Cyril kissed his papa again, and was led away by Letty, restored to favour but scarcely to confidence.

"Kiss her for me!"—a child's words, and yet how

they burned into Florestan's heart. He blushed unconsciously as he repeated them; and looked at the rose long and lovingly before he put it in his coat; then as he idly adjusted it in the silken loop he heard Cyril's voice again saying, "I think you see her every day, because you look so happy now."

Was he happy? He scarcely knew. At times he was the proudest of men—again the most self-humbled. He had not spoken to her of love; to be sure he had known her but a week. A week!—it seemed as if he had always known her; as if she were a part of himself. A week!—as though days counted in love. Love's hour-glass marks only sighs and tears; true love has no such dial; near the object beloved, the sands of happiness run together like the sands of the sea-shore. There is no shifting of the glass until all have run out, and then—there is no more need of counting. Florestan had as yet neither sighed nor sorrowed. His love had come upon him so suddenly, so strongly, that he never once thought of combating it. It was a happiness in itself. There was a devotion in its slightest fancy which made him feel as if he had never before known the meaning of the word. What would he not do for her? He never said to himself, "What if she should not love me!" There was a strange security in his happiness, born of its purity and disinterested-

ness ; he only said to himself, "I love her." These three words were his world—his past, present, and future.

Ten minutes later he was ringing at Mr. Rozen's door. The night was dark, the wind had risen high, and the air was bitter cold.

"We shall have early winter," he said ; and whilst he was reflecting on the seasons the door opened.

CHAPTER V.

FLORESTAN looked about with some curiosity, but even his practised eye saw that nothing had been spared in the sumptuousness of the decorations. The rooms were already crowded ; the light, warmth, and flowers formed a cheery contrast with the outer cold and darkness. The rooms were thrown one into the other ; the back drawing-rooms alone arranged for dancing. A deep conservatory formed an octagonal to the right of the dancing-hall, and looking about it seemed difficult to say where one room began and the other left off. The mirrors were so cunningly placed that they reflected not one but countless chambers ; the ceilings were garlanded with natural vines and clambering flowers ; the open door of the conservatory disclosed an arbour growing above a fountain whose waters tinkled melodiously, and whose spray floated rather than fell into a miniature lake, filled with pink pond-lilies and maiden-hair ferns.

Florestan wandered through the rooms; in the third he found Enilda. Contrary to American fashion she was seated, receiving her guests.

She stretched out a hand, and welcomed him with a bright smile. What was it that reminded him of the salons of the old Paris Faubourg; of great ladies receiving their guests, and of the homage usually paid to the lady of the house? Thinking of this he came forward and kissed her hand. Then he raised his eyes to hers, and murmured some words of thanks for her gracious welcome.

“Will you believe it,” she said, “papa has just this moment—oh! here he is. Papa”—and she beckoned him with a glance,—“papa, this is Mr. Florestan; Mr. Florestan, my father.” Then the men bowed and shook hands, the former repeating the story of Cyril being lost and found, his gratitude, and what he owed Miss Rozen.

Eric Rozen responded with polite commonplace, and added how proud he was to think that his daughter had been the means of adding so much to Mr. Florestan’s happiness, etcetera;—then more guests came up, and Mr. Rozen was obliged to bow hastily and turn his attention to them.

Florestan looked at him. Did he imagine it? Was it only fancy, or had they already met? There was a tone in Eric Rozen’s voice that sounded familiar.

He looked at him again and said to himself: "No; we have never met before. Faces I cannot remember, but voices always—and yet—"

"What a brown study you are in, Mr. Florestan! —a penny for your thoughts."

Florestan started.

"My dearest Mrs. Chromo, had you only been here a moment since, they might have been worth—millions."

Lucy opened her fan with a whirl.

"Don't begin so early," she said coquettishly, "or you will spoil my evening. No one else ever makes me such pretty speeches, and once accustomed to yours,—you know the rest."

"My dear"—she stooped to Enilda—"you have outdone us all. The whole of New York will be here; you are looking perfectly lovely; the house is transformed. It looks like some marvellous palace in the Arabian Nights. I shall never be able to hold up my head in Gotham again."

"Nonsense!" Enilda blushed faintly. "Do you really mean it? I am so glad; the idea of the decorations was—"

"Now, don't tell me; I know perfectly well they were the Baron's idea. Thank me again for having presented him to you. Gotham swears by him. No dinner can be given but he corrects the menu, and he

always suggests original dishes;—only to his friends of course. His advice is asked on every occasion by everybody; his counsel sought; his opinions quoted, and his criticism waited for. Why, until he says a thing is worth seeing, worth doing, or worth having, no one will move until he gives the signal; no one goes to opera, theatre, or concert until he praises the artists; he is at the head of every social committee, every hospital dinner, heads every charity concert, arranges every ball in New York, and if the truth were known—”

“ Which it will be where lives a Mrs. Chromo.”

“ Exactly; if the truth were known, Mr. Florestan, people could never get married, buried, nor transported without his aid; and his greatest virtue I have yet to name.”

“ Name it.” Florestan pressed his gibus to his heart. “ Name it, and we bow to the conqueror.”

“ He is the best waltzer in New York, and leads the German like no one but—himself. Confess, Enilda, he is going to—”

“ Yes, he leads it to-night. Oh, a moment.” Then she spoke to a knot of arrivals, and turned again to Lucy Chromo.

“ He was going to open the ball with me; but the hostess—I can’t think of such a thing. First, we are going to have some music, you know.”

“ Miss Rozen ? ”

“ Mr. Florestan ? ”

“ Now or never,” thought he. It was worth trying for.

“ Might I hope—might I ask that, if you are not engaged—”

Lucy Chromo helped him out.

“ Yes, Enilda, he’s a splendid dancer; almost as good as the Baron.”

“ Oh, madam ! ” He bowed deprecatingly.

Enilda looked at him for a moment, then she said carelessly :

“ The German ! —you mean the German ? Well, if you like; only you must promise to take another partner when I am tired. I never danced much. The truth is”—and she lowered her voice—“ I don’t believe I know how to dance at all. I couldn’t make myself ridiculous with the Baron, but I don’t mind some way with you.” Then she looked deep into his eyes.

His heart bounded.

“ Don’t thank me,” she said; “ and Cyril, my little pet, how is he ? ”

“ He sent you a message. He told me—”

Then he stopped suddenly. He had come near blurting it all out.

Enilda opened her eyes very wide.

“Why, did he know you were coming here ?”

“Yes; and—and he told me—to give you—his love.”

“Now you see,” she replied gaily, “how I have captured that innocent heart, Lucy.”

“Yes, dear. This house is too lovely.” She sighed and adjusted a flower in her bosom.

“Cyril has sent me his love. What a pity he is not older.”

Florestan looked at her.

“His is a happy age. Four ;—think of it.”

“I do; and—and I wouldn’t be four again any more than I would be forty this minute. Oh ! here comes Flora and her friend ; now you see I shall soon be elbowed out of my place. I am tired of sitting.”

“Will you walk—”

“Into my parlour ? said the spider to the fly.’ No, thank you. I may be a fly—a butterfly—but I cannot be entrapped in your parlour. Still—” She got up and took his arm.

They drew near Flora. “Isn’t she beautiful ?” said Enilda, looking towards her friend.

Florestan, on the contrary, looked at Enilda, but said nothing. She fluttered her fan uneasily. His deep glance had something disturbing in it. Had he spoken he would have said :

“I do not see other women when I am by your side.” As it was, his eyes spoke for him; they said practically the same thing.

She smiled.

“Well!”

“Well!”

“I didn’t mean that—”

“What?”

“What—what you meant.”

“What did I mean?”

Was she begging the question? She made him no answer.

“You want me to say in words just what I mean? That—that no woman can be beautiful or even attractive where you are.”

He tried in vain to steady his voice. He longed, there and then, to take her in his arms and tell her he adored her; and she—“perhaps she is flirting with me,” he thought. The bare idea made his heart cease beating. He turned pale, and half-stopped walking.

“Are you faint?” she said suddenly. “What is it?” and an anxious cloud passed over her face.

She took away her hand which had pressed his arm but too lightly.

“Perhaps it is the heat?” she added. “Come, you

shall take me to the supper-room ; we will have some wine. You—you are not ill ? ”

“ No indeed,” he said ; “ I—I can’t tell what it is.” Then he smiled. “ You will laugh ; but I am like a woman. I surely felt a pain in my heart.”

“ Yes ; like most women. Not like me ; thank Heaven, I have no heart. Heart disease doesn’t run in my family ! ” She fanned herself recklessly. “ I wish it did.”

“ Ah ! it does in mine ; but why do you wish that ? ”

She gave him a strange look which seemed for a moment to throw a shadow across his face ; then she laughed—a hard, unmusical laugh.

“ You mustn’t ask questions. Let me speak to Flora, and we will go to the supper-room. Here she is now ! ”

Flora came forward ; she presented half-a-dozen friends, and went into ecstasies over the rooms.

“ Mamma is coming late,” she said, “ so is papa, if he can get away. My dear, this young man”—she indicated a fair youth standing to her left—“ is the Honourable Mr. Willis Pastor, a great friend of an old friend of Lucy’s. I don’t know that you ever heard of him, but he was an Englishman, and his name was Claremont—”

This time it was Enilda who stopped and turned pale.

She reeled and would have fallen had Florestan not caught her.

“For God’s sake!” he said, “what is the matter?”

Flora rushed towards her, Mr. Pastor looked anxious, and immediately a crowd swarmed around.

Enilda was herself in a moment.

“Oh! indeed it is nothing,—thanks. I—felt giddy, and caught my foot in a flounce of my dress. See, it is torn!”

She put out her foot, and the point of her slipper showed through the lace which lay an inch on the carpet, in front of her frock.

“I should think so,” said Flora hastily. “Enough to have tripped any one up. The next *auto-du-fé* at which I would like to assist would be a funeral pile of dressmakers.”

Enilda laughed. She had recovered her composure and held out her hand to Mr. Pastor.

“Any friend of Mr. Claremont’s is welcome,” she said, but Flora hastily interrupted:

“Why, Enilda, I—when did you meet? You never told me you knew him.”

“I never knew him well,” she replied strangely; “that is to say, we met on the Continent; he once came to see us in Laramie, but returned rather

suddenly to England, did he not?" She was holding her dress up carelessly as she spoke; "I was also going to say that any of Mrs. Chromo's friends are doubly welcome. Is—do you like New York?"

"I think it delightful,"—instinctively he glanced at Flora.

Enilda smiled.

She liked this boy. He was helping her out. One word more. Had she betrayed herself? She thought not. Yet she fancied she saw a strange light in Florestan's eyes.

"I suppose you know Claremont is married?"

Mr. Pastor's voice was ringing in her ears.

"Ah, indeed!" She fanned herself airily.

"Yes, to Lady Mildred Allison—rich, and such a good sort. She's awfully nice, you know, 'pon my word—takes a five-barred gate like a man."

Aha—she remembered the letter at Laramie—the name Mildred. She felt her strength leaving her; this time Flora came to the rescue.

"My dear, you look too pale, do go and have some wine, and have your maid fasten up that lace. Take her away, Mr. Florestan. Oh, there's Mr. Rozen! I'll be the lady of the house, dear, till you come back. Don't hurry; you are in good hands."

Enilda walked through the rooms, nodding right and left to her smiling guests. They finally reached the supper-room.

“Odd, isn’t it?” she said. “The lady of the house coming in first to take refreshments.”

He placed a chair, she sank wearily into it. At that moment a band struck up.

She lifted her head.

“The Huguenots,” she continued, leaning forward. “Don’t you hear the beginning of the famous duet? I think I will take a glass of champagne; the selection of music before the German was made by me. I hope you like the Huguenots?—it is one of my favourite operas. Let me drink to your health and happiness.”

She touched his glass lightly, but trembled so that she spilt the wine. A few drops fell on his hand. He lifted it to his lips.

“They say it is lucky to spill champagne,” she said. “You should put one drop on each temple, and make a wish, your wish will surely come true. See—do as I do; but by good rights I suppose I ought to perform the ceremony for both, ’cause—cause, as my old nurse, Charlotte Corday, says, ‘I am the ’linquent, I spilled the fluid.’ Bend over. No; on second thought I dare not: you must take the will for the deed.”

She touched her forehead lightly at both temples.
Then he touched his likewise.

“Now wish,” she said, solemnly. “Have you wished?”

“Yes. Have you?”

She lifted her eyes; they seemed a “blaze of living light.”

“Yes; and my wish will come true, I hope.”

“I am curious,” he said laughingly; “I beg your pardon—I am curious—men all are, but—may I know your wish?”

“It is very simple. I wished for—forgetfulness;—and you?”

He looked at her steadily.

“And I, for—remembrance.”

She laughed.

“How serious you are!—and, seriously, is there—can there be such a thing as real remembrance? I don’t believe in it. Why should one remember? I—don’t let me shock you; but I don’t believe much in anything.”

Her voice stung him. It was cold and desperate; there was a recklessness in it which ill became her youth; and now for the first time he noticed something unusual in her look. He thought, “Is it true that there is no perfect beauty which has no strangeness in it?” Aloud he said:

"You don't believe in anything—have you then no illusions?"

"None."

Was she in earnest or joking? Probably the latter. He imitated her tone:

"And—how long since, may I ask?"

"Oh, ages, Mr. Florestan. Don't you know when we have our first all-powerful, supreme disillusion? I mean—we women."

He confessed his ignorance.

"It is when we find out that our stockings are not filled at Christmas time by Santa Claus in—in person. Are you satisfied? Now take me back. Oh, my dress!—I had forgotten it." She sent a servant for her maid, and continued:

"Yes; that is the first and most lasting disillusion; after that deception comes easy." She leant back in her chair and laughed. "Most women won't confess the truth, but I will. I was heartbroken then, and—and I have never gotten over it."

He looked at her.

"Here comes your maid," he said, and turned away his face with a pained expression. The flounce was restored to its former place. By this time a couple came into the room, then another, and in a moment dozens were seen coming in stately file through the arched doorway.

“Come,” she said, rising imperiously; “come and see my conservatory. The pink pond-lilies were sent me from Boston. Let us go this way, and we will avoid the crowd. I am tired. My first party is only begun, and I feel as if I could scarcely stand. But you—you don’t say anything; are you fond of flowers?”

“Very.” Unconsciously he looked at Cyril’s rose. Her thoughts followed his eyes.

“It is beautiful,” she said.

“May—may I tell you about it?” he said eagerly. She looked curious.

“Has it then a history?”

“It will have, if—if you accept it. Don’t be offended, but—Cyril brought it to me this evening, and said that I might wear it; but it was ultimately destined for you. I was to give it to you with his love.”

“Did he?—the dear child! Now fancy his thinking of me. Well, and you don’t fulfil his wishes?”

She spoke laughingly and stretched out her hand. Florestan’s heart beat strangely. She was only trifling with him, of course; and yet—

“How long you are! He who hesitates, and so forth. Now I am not unkind; a fair exchange is—you know the rest. You shall have the sweetest

flower in my bouquet, or—would you like one of these ?”

She lightly touched her bodice.

“Would I? How can you ask such a question?”

“Woman can do anything. I mean—I mean woman is or should be capable of anything; but here we are. What do you think of the pink lilies? Oh, the flower; yes, of course; but give me the rose first. I think I will give you these sprays of valley lily—or, this.” She touched some stephanotis.

“No; the first.”

Then she gave him two tiny blossoms and a bit of mignonette. He carefully placed them where Cyril’s rose had been.

She surveyed him critically.

“You are the loser—that single rose had something royal, something superior in its loneliness. Shall I?—would you like it back? Tell me, were you preparing to make a conquest to-night?”

“Yes; and the rose was the medium.”

“Poor Mr. Florestan, and its destiny is changed. I have come between the object of your love and your ambition. Will you ever forgive me? But we mustn’t stop here so long. People will think that”—she looked at him audaciously; “people will think that you are making love to me, a thing I should say most unlikely ever to happen.”

“Why?”

She stared at him; the tone of his voice changed her, her face grew cloudy.

“Why?” He repeated the question with a more determined voice.

“You’re never in earnest. No; don’t make love to me; it isn’t worth while; I—I think too much of you to allow you to waste your time in anything beyond—beyond an everyday flirtation. Come, let us go. Do you wish to make me angry?” Then she stopped suddenly. “Ythan Florestan, it’s no use; I believe, my soul, you’ve fallen in love with me; and—and it’s a pity. I—I had counted on you for one of my good friends, and now—”

She twisted some moss nervously in her fingers.

“Don’t say any more,” she continued strangely. “We mustn’t quarrel: remember that we have still the joys of the German before us. If you look sulky I shall choose another partner.”

“I would never permit you. I tell you—”

“Don’t tell me—anything.”

“I will; I adore the ground—”

A scornful look flashed over her face.

“I know the lines,” she said, and turned away.

“What can you mean? You—is it possible? I am too late—you love another.”

"Love! I hate the whole human race. No; hate is a strong word; I mean that—I am indifferent."

"To be indifferent one must have loved." He looked steadily at her—he spoke sadly. Was it this sadness which touched her?

"Have loved? I don't know. Don't ask me. It is not possible that you care for me. It is only a fancy—you will get over it. Believe me you will; they all do. Friendship is good; flirting is better—anything better which is not—'

"Love,—the superlative best. But I love you devotedly."

She laughed and said,

"I sha'n't listen. The verb 'to love' admits no adverb. Would you like your rose now?"

"Thank you—no," he said dryly.

At that instant Flora rushed into Enilda's arms.

"My dearest child, where on earth have you been? We thought you and Mr. Florestan had eloped."

They were in the drawing-room by this time. Florestan spoke up boldly:

"The truth is, Miss Grayson, had you given me another moment I would have proposed it to Miss Rozen."

"Now, Mr. Florestan, that's just like you—and me, and my broken heart. I might have known that

Enilda would have cut me out the first thing. Enilda, do you know who has just come in ? ”

“ No.”

“ Prof. Protoplasm and Miss Chandos-Cressy ; I heard some one at my elbow say :

“ ‘ That will do well enough, dearest sister, but the origin of maccaroni is unknown. History thus far has failed to enlighten the world as to the first human being on record who divined, made, cooked, or ate the Italian national dish. I fear before we know, Orion will burst—’ Well, my love, I thought I should burst, so I escaped, and—here I am. Note Miss C.-C. She is in half-mourning still, and her eyebrows are not as black to-night as usual.”

“ Flora,” said Enilda, “ how can you ? ” Florestan laughed, and looked ahead of him at two figures standing—not unlike the Campidoglian Psyché and Cupid.

Flora explained.

“ She was our schoolmistress, or rather the head of the Well-born Seminary. He was our Latin Professor. She is now a millionaire ; he—a judge of maccaroni. Oh, law goes fast in this country. Enilda ! ”

“ Yes, dear.”

“ Isn’t young Pastor charming ? ”

“ To judge from his looks and your enthusiasm—yes.”

“ I suppose you are jealous because he has already escaped your net and fallen into mine.”

“ Poor youth ! ” said Florestan—“ a second Scylla and Charybdis.”

“ I have heard of them before,” said Mrs. Chromo, coming up and catching Florestan’s last words, “ but I can never remember what family they belonged to. Of course we all have a general idea of the Cenci and even Lucretia Borgia.”

“ The Siamese twins,” added Flora, “ and Hero and Leander ; but I confess the S. and C. combination are rather hazy even in my mind.”

“ I wouldn’t try to make them any clearer for the world, were I you, Miss Flora,” suggested the Baron. “ There is the same delightful uncertainty attending most of the ancient families of to-day, and even we who inherit old names and traditions are particular to refer to them, but very careful not to—”

“ Ventilate them,” interrupted Florestan.

The Baron shrugged his shoulders.

“ Ventilate is an ugly word,” he said ; “ it suggests sewers and factories, and so forth. But if you like the word, pray use it.”

Mr. Rozen came forward.

“ How well you speak English, Baron,” he said ; “ where can you have learned it ? ”

“ Oh ! my old friend Grizzy—I beg her pardon, the

Arch-Duchess Griselda—and I had the same teacher when I was a child near Schonbrunn. She—the teacher—was related to Lady Jane Grey indirectly. Her hair was certainly as long—”

“And evidently her memory,” said Florestan; “but, is the music about to begin?” a slim, black-eyed youth seated himself at a piano in one corner of the drawing-room.

“It’s William Russel,” said Flora; “he plays like an artist—the greatest compliment I can pay him.”

There was unusual silence, and the pianist delicately threaded his way through a mazy Chopin inspiration.

“I always feel sentimental when I hear Chopin,” said Enilda. “Flora, do you remember Kitty Harper and the Massanaello march—not à propos of Chopin, but of Chicago?”

Flora remembered, and Florestan begged to hear the story, which was told him with great gusto by the latter.

Then came more music—from the distance; the players were out of sight. The music rippled on, tender, soft; indescribably soft, indescribably enchanting.

“The Baron’s idea” explained Enilda, noticing Florestan’s delight and astonishment.

“Do you like it?”

He looked more than he could ever say, and yet he said a good deal.

“It is Royal,” he replied. “I think in music most Americans can claim a birthright almost as noble as that of the Baron; but I hear that you are an exquisite pianist—that you play beautifully. When will you play for me?”

“Some day when we are alone.”

His heart bounded; that meant that he was to see her again—and alone.

“Ah!” he cried, “how can I thank you enough! When shall that be—soon?”

“Soon—ah! who knows. Perhaps yes—perhaps no.”

“You are cruel.”

“I am kind; and we begin dancing in a few minutes.”

“I claim my partner,” he said with a sigh; “and—and before the evening is over you must name the day—”

Flora came up humming,

“‘ My pretty Jane, my pretty Jay—a—a—a—ane,—
Oh never, etc. etc.’ ”

“Name the day indeed! Mr. Florestan—here, now! could anything be more unromantic? I give in; you’re the clearest case of mash I have ever seen;

but Enilda knows how to treat you. Her time is spent giving unsuccessful lovers their walking-papers, signed, sealed, and countersigned by her noble right hand."

"Nonsense," cried Enilda. "Flora, how can you? Mr. Florestan is asking me to say when—"

"Naturally, but I protest; the haste is indecent."

"Flora, do be quiet; he is asking me to say when—when I will play him a—a—"

"Moonlight sonata," suggested Mrs. Chromo.

"Come away," said Enilda, taking Florestan's arm; "they are a barbarous set. I prefer even your society."

"It's an ill wind, etc.," said Florestan laughingly.

Then he offered his arm and led her away.

The cotillon, or, as it is called in America, the German, began with the usual graceful dances. The room was a crush of beautiful women and handsome men; the music perfection, the cotillon favours a revelation.

"They must have cost a cool two thou' at least," whispered Pastor to Flora. "Is Mr. Rozen, then, so rich?"

"Rich, yes. So so: not over rich for New York. Why, how many millions do you think there are standing in this room to-night? Guess."

"Impossible. I was plucked at nineteen even in simple algebra."

"I can't point, it isn't polite; but you follow my head, and look about; each nod means *ten*. Don't forget."

"Forget you! Never."

"Nonsense. Ten—now count."

She began.

"Stop, stop!" he cried; "I can't follow you. A polka?—come." He quickly swung his arm around her waist. "Don't nod"—they were whirling around to a merry measure—"but tell me plainly how much. This suspense is awful."

"I believe you," she said. "Well, suppose we say five hundred millions."

"What,—sterling!"

"No; dollars," she said, in a disgusted tone. "Mr. Pastor, do you English want the earth?"

"They have most of it," cried Mrs. Chromo, who came up at that moment; "but there is one patch which slipped through their fingers in the long ago, viz. 17—76. What a heavenly polka!"

"Not so long ago but that we still regret it," said Mr. Pastor politely. "I am a polkeur enragé and this is—a dream."

"I shall regret only one thing," cried Flora,—"the end of this ball." Then another figure came up, and

before she knew what it was all about, Professor Protoplasm shot forth from a distant corner, as a vagrant star shoots through the midnight heavens, seized Flora, and whirled her along with him in a headlong, dazzling, and irresistible flight. Mr. Pastor's mouth was still open. His jaws seemed to have sprung from the concussion of the shock.

Rozen, the Count, and a number of men were walking through the rooms. The host stopped before a pale Bougoureau.

“It ought to be real,” he explained quietly; “it cost me fifty thousand dollars. And that one there—”—he pointed to a very Andrea-del-Sarto-like Raphael,—“is called the ‘Madonna della Ro-ver-ia,’ or something like that in Italian, and it cost me two hundred thousand.”

“Really!” said lawyer Harkins, a small man with compressed lids, compressed lips, and compressed unmentionables. “Jiminy! how these things do run up, to be sure. I’m not much on classics, and those naked women—”

“Oh,” said Adam Chromo, “Lucy—ahem! my wife, Mrs. Chromo—says it’s all right; if they’re classic they’re covered. The old story of the Garter, I suppose, ‘Honey sat to ma’s prepense,’ or words to that effect. We brought home half the Palatine Gallery, and I vow, old masters or young, some of

'em I'm ashamed to look at when I'm alone by myself. We had some trouble in gettin' 'em, but a Custom-house man I squared on the docks said that whatever disappears now-a-days from famous galleries is spoken of as—‘Carried away by Napoleon when he visited Florence the first time.’”

“By George!” cried Rozen, “how cute they are! Poor Nap—won’t even let him sleep in peace in his grave.”

“My dear Rozen, celebrities have to pay for their fame,” replied Adam Chromo. “Now I for one think it’s much decenter to accuse a dead than a live man of theft, and a man who would get rid of a nice woman like Josephine in the way Nap did, would have done as he did, and that settles it”—Adam Chromo forgot his own pending suit—“but I have the pictures. There’s a rain of old masters at home; and in a country where money is plentier than classics I ’spose I oughtn’t to complain.”

“How is G. and G. to-day?” asked the small compressed man; “do you believe in it.”

“Oh, it’s good stock enough, if that brute Levis don’t water it too much to-night. Some plants—Wall Street exotics—require little watering,” said Adam Chromo, reflectively. “And yet they’re treated like the common or garden flower, not alone deluged, but diluted when the sun goes down.”

“A lovely party,” said Harkins irrelevantly; “it must have cost a lot, Rozen.”

“Oh, a mere nothing,” responded the host; “not worth mentioning—a few thousands.”

“Isn’t it strange,” suggested Adam Chromo, “that you get better champagne in New York than any place else in the world; excepting, perhaps, Russia and England?”

“Not strange, when you think how much we pay for it!” put in Rozen. “Now I gave for my last lot, brut ’64, six dollars a bottle in the dozen; but of course money is nothing when you get what you want.”

“Well, flowers now!” hazarded Harkins. “I’ve never seen such flowers anywhere in the world as I have seen in America; and they’re not dear considering.”

“Why, they’re for nothing!” said Rozen. “Why, all that ceiling decoration to-night only cost five thousand dollars, and—and—”

“It’s good enough for Queen Victoria at home,” cried Chromo sententiously, “but talking of flowers—”

The conversation was abruptly stopped. A hundred young couples came waltzing through the rooms, flinging airy cotillon favours right and left. The dancing was going on in one mad carnival. There were sounds of stirring music, laughing voices here

and there, women standing in circles, and men flying around in startling figures. The crowds rushed *pêle-mêle* into one room, and rushed as *pêle-mêle* out into another. The hours were wearing on; daylight was insinuating her faint beams between closed shutter and draped curtain, yet the flowers never drooped, the lights never flickered, and the only signs that a ball had been going on were those mementos left like the wounded on a battle-field—a shining gem gleaming on the waxen floor; shreds of lace, petals, and fallen flowers; an opaline scrap of mother-of-pearl chipped from some dainty fan; the ribbon from a cotillon favour; or a ball-programme unconsciously dropped from some fair dancer's chatelaine.

Enilda finished the last figure. She was slightly apart from the others, but Florestan was by her side speaking earnestly.

“ You are quite right,” he was saying; “ but I can’t help telling you. You may not love me; but I know, I feel that I shall love you as long as I live. Can you—will you give me some hope ? ”

“ Sh— ! some one will hear you; some one— ”

“ You are not answering me. Oh ! ” he cried, “ I have feared this—to fall in love at last, for the first time in my life, and to love in vain ! ”

His anguish was so real that his words were scarcely distinguishable.

“For Heaven’s sake,” she cried, “don’t press me for an answer; don’t ask me questions. Let us be friends.”

“Friends—friends only?”

“Good night,” she said hurriedly. “I am not trifling with you, I like you too well. Friends only!” She echoed his words with a strange intonation. “Friends only! Is there anything in this world so pure, so true, so holy, as friendship?—Good night.”

He bowed low over her hand, and in another moment was gone.

CHAPTER VI.

IT was early in the morning of the day following Enilda's first party. Florestan had not yet risen; contrary to his usual custom, ten o'clock found him still in bed; he was nervous, ill at ease, and his mind was constantly running on the events of the previous evening. He could scarcely tell where he stood with Enilda Rozen. Did she like or dislike him? Was she an arrant coquette?—or was she simply like thousands of girls, light-hearted and careless?—an acknowledged beauty, treating all men alike; chaffing with one and flirting with another, caring so little about men as to be absolutely indifferent to them one and all. Indifference—ah, that is the worst rival a man may have; and Florestan sighed as he reflected that perhaps after all he was only the same to her as any other who had the proud honour of leaving his bits of pasteboard at her father's house in Madison Avenue.

Florestan wanted to get up, but somehow he felt

very ill; there was a heaviness in his head and a heaviness in his limbs which seemed to press them down as if with weights. He lazily tried to turn over; he felt a severe twinge in his right shoulder. "I have taken cold," he muttered; "I hope it is nothing serious; nothing that will keep me in the house so that I cannot see *her*."

His thoughts were interrupted by a knock at the door. "Come in," he said pettishly. His valet advanced to his bedside.

"What is it, Walter?" he queried. "I believe I am ill. What is that?—a card? No one to see me now, I hope!"

"Well, that's just what it is, sir; but I trust you are not ill," replied Walter.

"No—yes, I believe I am; but what is it?—something important? What time is it?"

"Well, sir, I don't know how important it is. It is a strange old man, who begs most earnestly to see you. He is waiting in the hall, and it is just about ten." As he finished speaking he handed the card to his master.

Florestan took it. Half-raised on his pillow he read the name wonderingly. "Arundel," he said to himself. "Arundel! I must have heard the name before somewhere; and yet I can't say where, to save my life."

"He seems an old chap, sir," hazarded Walter, "and looks to me as if he were not right in his head. I feel kinder sorry for him."

Florestan laughed good-humouredly. "I have spoilt you, Walter, your heart is softer than mine; but I can't get up. I suppose he might come in here and see me. Tell him I am not feeling well, and if he does not mind my being in bed I will see him for a few minutes."

"I think you had better have your breakfast in bed, sir; the ball was very late."

"I think I'll have to have it in bed if I have it anywhere." He moved his arm uneasily. "Oh, just my luck, I suppose; to set up an inflammatory rheumatism, and the winter only beginning. Was I home late? It did not seem so." He was back again in the ball-room, saying good night to Enilda Rozen; looking into her fair face, and imprinting a kiss on the tips of her fairy fingers.

In the mean time Walter was showing in Mr. Florestan's morning visitor. Jean Arundel came awkwardly into the room and stopped half-way between the door and the bed. An umbrella was under his arm, and he was twirling a hat slowly in his hands.

Florestan addressed him cheerily.

"Mr. Arundel, I believe." Arundel nodded.

“Just draw up a chair. Can I do anything for you? You find me in rather an awkward strait; I am not often in bed at this hour, but I was out late last night. Walter, just place a chair for Mr. Arundel.” Jean seated himself near the bed; he stood the umbrella up beside him against the chair, and turned his hat top downwards between his knees; this pantomime finished, Florestan resumed.

“Out late last night, and whether it be laziness or rheumatism I can’t tell; I only know that I feel like a fool, and ache all over.”

“Perhaps it is ague,” suggested his visitor, and he twirled his shabby hat in his hands. “Quinine is good for it, but I don’t believe much in quinine myself; in the long run it is as bad a habit as opium or arsenic; it makes you light-headed too, and I can’t afford to be that now. I need all my wits about me. All!” he repeated absently, and he re-twirled his hat into its former position.

Florestan looked compassionately at him.

“You came to see me,” he ventured; “can I be of any service? Would you mind telling me exactly what you want in as few words as possible, and why you came to me?”

“Why I came to you? It is very easy to tell why I came to you,” replied Arundel, with a choking voice. “I am old and broken-down; I trusted in a

man, and he betrayed me ; I have been robbed and ruined ; I have not a friend in the world ; and I am trying to hunt down the man who has wronged me. I went down town to find him the other day, for you see he lives here, and as I got into the omnibus, I overheard some men talking. They mentioned your name, and said you were the best fellow in New York, and that if they ever wanted a favour done they would come to you to do it. Well, I suppose you take it rather strange. I have not a friend in the world ; I don't know which way to turn, nor what to do ;" and then he dropped his eyes, folded his hands over his hat, and assumed an attitude of despondency.

Florestan moved slightly on his pillows. "I can't quite understand," he murmured gently ; he wondered to himself whether or no his strange visitant were not a little hazy in his mind. "If you could explain more fully," he continued in a louder voice, "perhaps we might come to something definite."

Had Jean Arundel at length found a friend ? It seemed so. There was something in the tone of Florestan's voice which changed his despondent attitude to one of expectancy, and he lifted his drooping eyes full and clear into Florestan's face. "God bless you for ever !" he exclaimed, and he dashed his fist into his eyes as if to wipe away a tear. "God bless

you, sir, whether you help me or not. I'll tell you as quickly as I can the whole story. My name is Arundel—”

“Arundel?”

“Yes; what about it?”

“Why, it's a common name; I seem to have heard it before.”

“Just what I thought about yours,” said Arundel, more heartily than he had hitherto spoken; “but I can't place it. However, you hear my story in the mean time, perhaps you'll recollect all about it. As I said, my name's Arundel. My father was a very well-to-do Eastern farmer. We were three children, and father and mother both stepped off early, Heaven bless 'em! and the property was equally divided between us three. Somehow we could not make it work together, so we just decided to go snooks on it; that is to say, divide it up between us; each taking his share and going his own way. My pile was about three thousand dollars; and I had a funny dream. Are you listening to all this?”

“Go on,” said Florestan, politely.

“I dreamed the same thing twice over. My mother and father were in it, and my brother and sister, and this dream advised me to stop in my old home. Well, I'm not much on visions; I always believe those things go by contraries; so I packed

up everything, took all my collateral, and started out West to seek my fortune. I met a man on the train, and I struck up friends with him right off. Well, sir, you won't believe it, but that man ruined me. I once thought he was dead, and even after he'd betrayed me I still had such a sneaking kind of regard for him, that I wept like a child." Arundel's voice slightly faltered. "But this feeling is nonsense. If the man's alive he is the biggest villain that I know of—unhung; and I'm determined to get even with him, if it takes me a lifetime to do it. Well, to make a long story short, sir, this man and I entered into a sort of a partnership in San Francisco, to go into the mining business together. We were to hunt up and *explore* this new copper region in Lower California, you know, between Stockton and Fort Miller. I was to furnish the money, and he the experience."

"Ah!" said Florestan. "I see; the old story. Go on."

"Ah! you know something about it, sir. I know there are lots of villains in this world, but I never could bring myself to think that man one. Well, we entered into a compact, then and there; this was in—let me see—September, I think, of '71; you know the year of that big blaze in Chicago. I gave him five hundred dollars to start with, and he went

off to look for the mines, while I was to look about forming a company—a stock company of course—in San Francisco, but went to Chicago, and by the way, just saved my life and no more in the fire."

"Terrible affair," interrupted Florestan; "but—"

"Luckily we had nothing well under way then, as it was only about five weeks after we had started our scheme, and I knew a man in the Garden City whom I thought I could strike for a big interest in the business; but that fire sickened me. I returned to Frisco. And as soon as we got the thing into working order, my partner was to put the stock on the market. You know how all those things work. I wasn't in any hurry about this; I thought I'd work on the strict Q. T. for a while; then when we'd got things in fine order, why, we'd spring the mine on the market, and make a big splurge all at once. Well, he, Vane, went off. He went prospecting here and there, writing first from one place and then another, nice letters I must say, and hopeful too; then he said he'd found a place to settle down, and asked for another thousand dollars, which I sent him. In a few months more—all the while, mind you, I was working quietly to get up this company—he wrote the lead was no good; a thief of an overseer had bolted with the money, and he was going to try another digging farther down the river. He wanted another

thousand dollars. I sent it. In a few months more he wrote me that fortune had favoured us, we would soon be millionnaires, and that I ought soon to think of putting the company before the world. He did not ask for any money this time; but two days later a letter came saying he wanted a thousand dollars on the spot; it was all right, and so forth; and not having all the money, I sent what I had of my own, and made up the rest with those pals who were going to form part of our company. Well, Mr. Florestan, would you believe what I'm going to tell you?"

"I have no reason to disbelieve you, Mr. Arundel. I suppose you're going to tell me you have been hardly used; but go on, Mr. Arundel; I'm interested in your story; you have evidently been—"

"Hardly used you're going to say! That isn't the name for it; Vane treated me like a dog. He got more money out of me even than that last. I'd have forgiven him cheating me, if he'd been unlucky and owned up to it like a man. It was my fault; I needn't have given him my money, but I couldn't forgive his deceiving me. I was living on credit in a boarding-house in San Francisco; I was sick and worried; the company didn't form as I expected. I hadn't twenty-five cents in my pocket, and I've seen the time when I didn't know where to get a square meal; but

I kept hoping against hope. Things went getting blacker and blacker until the smash came, and one morning I received a letter saying :

“ I am heart-broken. I’ve spent my time and your money, and we are ruined ; I’m a desperate man. You are old, and may not live long, but I am young, so to speak, and so I sha’n’t live long ; I’m going to blow my brains out. Forgive me if you can, and forget me. I’m telling you the truth ; it will be no use your trying to hunt me up, for I’m as sick of life as you must be of our bargain.

“ VANE.”

“ Well, I wept when I read that letter, and I felt sorry for him. The company went to smash, and I had a fever, and was taken to the hospital.”

“ Did you never hear from him again ? Perhaps he really killed himself. I think I would if I had been he ; and how can I help you, Mr. Arundel ? ”

The latter jumped up, crying in a piercing voice :

“ Help me ! You can do everything. Don’t you understand it was only mere villainy ? He didn’t kill himself at all ; he is alive and well, and is a king in Wall Street. The house is Vane & Co., flourishing to-day on my money.”

“ Vane & Co. !—what do you mean ? Not *The Vane* surely ? Don’t walk about ; come closer and explain.”

"Yes, yes; *The Vane*. I can't be mistaken; some of the old friends saw him and knew him. I gave him up for dead for three years, then I began to get well, and I vowed to hunt him down. I was flat on my back another six months in the hospital, and I fairly begged my way from San Francisco to New York."

"But, Mr. Arundel, these are grave charges to make against a man in his position, unless you have proofs of what you are saying." Florestan stopped short. It was all very strange, very unusual, very incoherent, and yet in spite of himself he listened attentively, and his very act of listening was of such patience that it encouraged Arundel to continue. In spite of this, however, at the word proofs Arundel's face had slightly fallen.

"I have them in my pocket," he muttered. "Letters and notes and things, and I've got a printed statement besides." He began taking slips of paper from a portfolio hidden in his breast. "The truth is, I know these are proofs; I know they're all right; but I may as well tell you the truth, Mr. Florestan, that's where I want you to help me. These proofs ain't considered strong enough." Arundel was interrupted by a rap on the door. Walter came into the room carrying a breakfast-tray in his hands; he looked severely at Arundel, then cast an equally irate glance on his master.

"You've had no breakfast, sir," he said; "you're ill; it is going on for eleven, and I've brought it in."

Arundel looked up shamefacedly. "Oh, I beg your pardon," he cried, "I've been very thoughtless. Just go on and eat—do; my time's yours; I am 'sorry.'

Florestan smiled good-humouredly. In the mean while Walter had placed a small table with the tray by the bedside. "But you, Mr. Arundel; it's very late, but can I offer you any breakfast?"

The fragrant coffee was tempting. Arundel looked into Florestan's face, and his eyes spoke before his lips could form the words. "Yes?" said Florestan inquiringly. "Another cup, Walter, and don't come again until I ring. Now," he continued cheerily to Arundel, "tell me the rest as quickly as possible, and let me see your papers."

Was Florestan better, or had he forgotten his pain? He moved quite briskly in his bed, and began to make the coffee. Arundel looked at him humbly, and put his hand on his wrist, the wrist of the hand that was holding the coffee-pot. "You're a good man," he said, "and God 'll reward you. Before we break bread together, would you mind shaking hands with me?" Florestan put down the coffee-pot and extended his hand wonderingly; a slight flush came into his face; he shook hands with him, and then there was an awkward pause.

“Don’t mention it! Do you take sugar? Ah, here is Walter with another cup,” and Florestan half-nervously stretched out his hand. Did he wish to change the conversation?

“I’ll take two bits of sugar, Mr. Florestan, and I don’t mind if I do eat something; the truth is, I’ve not touched food to-day.” Florestan felt ashamed; he scarcely knew why. Arundel’s voice went to his heart, and he felt that he was telling him the truth; —he so rich, and this man with nothing. He felt an inward pang; he would help him; he would do something for him; and yet it was clear if he helped every one who came to him, a near morrow would surely find him a beggar. Aloud he said cheerfully: “All right; eat away, and show me the papers; all the documents you have; I’ll just swallow my coffee, and I’ll read the statement over. Don’t speak a word to me for a minute or two; if you’d like anything else, you know, just order what you want.”

Arundel waved his hand negatively towards the tray. “I am more starved for sympathy than I am for food,” he said gravely. “I can do with very little when I have hope to go on with,” and at the same time he washed down his words with a gulp of coffee.

Florestan was running his eye rapidly over the

statement, but answered casually. "Bacon says hope is a good breakfast, but an ill supper."

"Yes; well, Bacon said a good many things he didn't believe in himself," said Arundel, "and more than none care to believe in; but hope to me is what ballast is to a balloon, I couldn't go straight without it." Then he took another gulp of coffee and began spreading some butter on an already richly-furnished waffle. Florestan said nothing, but went on alternately reading the statement and taking his breakfast. The only sound heard in the room was the tinkle of the porcelain and silver, and the rustle of Arundel's papers. Florestan finally looked up.

"Well?" said Arundel.

"Well," responded the former; "I am sorry to say that all this is not proof enough against any man."

Arundel paled. "Don't say that, for God's sake; you are my last hope." Then he burst forth in a wilder tone, and stretched his hands towards heaven. "How many times I have cursed that euchre party on the Union Pacific Railway!"

Florestan dropped the papers on the bed and leaned eagerly forward. "Ah!" he said; "I know you now. Don't you remember me, Mr. Arundel? I was one of that party too, and the man Vane—" Florestan spanned his forehead with his thumb and forefinger as if thinking deeply—"and the man

Vane was the individual I won all that money from. Yes; I see it all now, and it was after that you went into that partnership in San Francisco?"

Arundel looked dazed. "Stop," he said; "I can't place it; I'm forgetting again. You see I had a brain-fever, and when I talk so much about it, and think so much about it, I lose my head; besides, this has been a day of emotions. I can't recollect any more. I think I'll go home and rest myself. I'll leave you all the papers, but may I come again and talk it over?"

Florestan looked at him pityingly, and touched the electric bell at his head. "Have you a lawyer?" he inquired.

"No."

"Have you any money?"

"No."

"Where are you going now?"

"Home."

"What do you call home, Mr. Arundel?"

"I—I'm living in a hydropathic establishment for my health. The director is an old friend of mine; this is his address," and he drew a square card from his pocket. Florestan took it; Walter appeared in the doorway. "My carriage for Mr. Arundel. I am going to send you home," he said, turning to the latter; "and I'll call on you to-day about five, or to-morrow

at the same hour. It's a bad business; I don't quite see our way out of it; but I promise you my help. Don't lose heart, and you'll hear from me very soon. Can I do anything for you? Are you in want of anything now?"

Arundel looked up nervously. "I think a shower-bath is the best thing I can have," he said. "My friend Dr. Parsons understands just how to treat me when one of these spells come on."

"Poor man," thought Florestan, "his sorrows have driven him out of his mind. It is a strange story."

"It's a long time since I've had one," continued Arundel. "I'm hazy, sure; but I know enough to know that you are befriending me. You'll never regret it, sir, never! Good-bye, and heaven bless you!"

CHAPTER VII.

THE winter was well over; Enilda had given many successful "At Homes;" the world flocked to the young heiress's feet as the moth flies into the flame of the candle. Amongst all her admirers, if Enilda showed a preference for one, that preference was for Florestan—and yet, did she love him? It was hard—very hard—to say. She always met him with pleasure, and bade him farewell with regret; he was certainly the most welcome visitor at her father's house. No entertainment could be complete without him. She might not remark his presence, but she never failed to notice his absence. She asked herself whether this were love or friendship, but instantly she imagined it might be the former her soul was up in arms, she loathed the whole human race, with the exception of one man, the one who had so cruelly betrayed her. When she thought of Florestan as a friend she forgot everything but the memory of his

ever-present, ever-ready friendship. No word of love had been spoken between them since the night of her first "Small and Early," yet she knew that he cared for her. She could not define her own feelings, but like every woman, or certainly nine hundred and ninety-nine thousand out of a million, she could perfectly well define the feelings of those who loved or professed to love her. She could weigh their every sentiment to the nicety of a hair, she could sound and feel the profoundest depths of their hearts, yet she could respond neither to the one nor to the other. The names of her adorers filled her card-baskets, yet even the alphabet of their adoration was as bewildering to her as ancient Greek or Sanscrit would have been.

To this wholesale indifference, as I have said, there was one exception, yet in all her moods and tenses she could read none of those signs which had betrayed her love for Claremont. No matter how sudden a meeting might be with Florestan, she neither flushed, paled, nor trembled at his approach. Her eye grew no clearer, her voice and laugh no softer, her speech no less steady at the sound of his voice. She sometimes pictured to herself what the world would be without him, and everything became suddenly indistinct, as when after years of blindness one suddenly sees the light.

“What nonsense!” she murmured; “what’s the use of my borrowing trouble at 150 per cent.? He is in love with me, but he’ll get over it; I’m not in love with him or any one, and I shall never get over it. We’ll go on being good friends for the next thirty or forty years to come.”

About the middle of January, New York had been startled by a general reception of deep black-edged cards—Baron de Marcie invited all his friends to a special mass to be sung at the new cathedral in memory of the death of his beloved uncle, the Count D’Orbach, whose loss he deplored, but whose title and estates he succeeded to. The church had been a marvel on this sad but memorable morning. There were more violets than had been worn by all the Buonapartists since Byron’s prophecy in his ‘Ode to the island of St. Helena’; there were flowers whose perfume would have put to shame the gardens of an Oriental sovereign; names and condolences were attached to this wealth of blossom with a richness if not Oriental at least American. Monsignor the Cardinal of New York read the mass. One hundred youths, whose voices would have immortalized the olden-time Sistine Chapel, sang the innumerable glories and virtues of the noble defunct; the stained glass windows were draped in violet and black; even the great organ pedals were covered with stamped

jetty velvet. The pews and aisles were filled with stately women robed in the blackest and newest of crape. The streets outside the cathedral door were filled with an eager respectful mass. Not alone the Governor of New York, but the Mayor, Aldermen, and City Council had telegraphed letters of condolence. Even the President of the United States had sent stereotyped regrets, and the flag which so joyously floated from the Baron's club, fluttered at half-mast, its grief-stricken Stars and Stripes, in red, white, and blue.

Three months had flown since then, and the Baron was beginning again to go into the world; Lent was just over. Enilda was about giving her first theatre party, when she received a perfumed, coronetted note, from her friend, once the Baron, now the Count de Marcie and D'Orbach. It ran thus:

“ MY DEAR MISS ROZEN,

“ Yes; I will accept your friendly invitation. Since receiving it I have reflected long and deeply. I have said to myself again and again, How can I laugh when he is no more? But as the most gaping wounds cauterize with the march of human events, so I hope will this, my profound blesser, disappear, and leave no other traces of my hurt than the indelible scar which, although scarcely visible on the surface, is

alas! to me much more than skin-deep. Yes; I will join your theatre party; I will dine with you in your sympathetic home; we will laugh at the merry antics of those players at the Casino, and sup afterwards at the favourite 'Del's' Pray present my honoured regards to your distinguished father, accept my best wishes for your own health and happiness, and believe me always grovelling at your feet, your servant and admirer,

"DE MARCIE AND D'ORBACH."

It was the 5th of April, and one of the loveliest days possible, even in New York. An early spring sang anew the legend of perennial beauty. Evening came, and the sun set in a crimson glory full on the waves of the silvery immemorial Hudson; birds' voices were heard singing in the Avenue trees, and the twilight was as late as the morning is early in England.

Enilda was busily awaiting her guests. She was flitting here and there, giving those unnatural and unnecessary orders which the young mistress of a house delights in, which were as promptly executed or disregarded by the staff of domestics. One by one the guests arrived. The Count, a picture of correct gloom, cast a sombre shadow as he came into the hall; the crape on his hat was so pathetic

and appealing, that it not only seemed to stain the valet's hands with an ebon stain, but it brought to all minds the late mass in the cathedral, and Gotham's grief over the Baron's irreparable loss. More than any one the Count seemed to feel that his present air of gloom might be a pall on the general spirits. When the guests were seated at table, he said :

“My friends, let me speak frankly. We cannot always be buried in the night of a profound grief; forget my revered relative's demise; I have put him out of my mind, as I have hung my crape-banded hat on the hat-rack, and put this amethyst ring, a family sign of hope, on my little finger.”

They were all very merry after the Count's speech, with the exception of Mr. Rozen, who sat ill at ease at the head of his table, who replied in monosyllables to the banter of his guests, and who every now and then cast a sidelong but deep, inexpressible glance at the Count.

Enilda was looking very lovely. She had donned a spring dress of emerald crape, and beryl-tinted “satin merveilleux.” Fine grasses were interwoven with emeralds and diamonds in her blonde hair, waves of crape and clusters of waterlilies, blended together and floated from her gracious limbs, as shadows blend and float on a mirrored stream. She seemed a very Undine coming forth from the Rhine's

enchanted rocks, beautiful to behold, but fatal to whomsoever should listen to her syren songs and charms. So Florestan thought as he looked, and wondered whether he would ever be any nearer to her. Whilst he was thinking she addressed him :

“A penny for your thoughts, Mr. Florestan ; you looked as far away just then as a man I once saw hanging from a balloon ; he went up, however, and was never heard of since. You may put on any expression you like, but there’s not the slightest danger of your going through one of my ceilings. Leave your bubbles, balloons, and air-castles, and come back to earth ! Have you heard what the Count has just been saying ? Not a word—naturally. Well, he has been telling me all about the performances at the Casino. The Prima Donna is a protégée of his, an American girl whose father was a bishop ; whilst the Tenor is a human creation of such divine attributes that every woman in New York is in love with him. I expect to be his next victim.”

“Ah indeed !” said Florestan. “Well, I think I must drink to the health of this theatrical Adonis.”

“And to my falling a victim, Mr. Florestan. I thought you’d take the announcement to heart ; perhaps turn pale and ask for salts or something like that.”

"Salts are not much in his line," interrupted the Count. "I can recommend olives," and he laughingly pointed to Florestan, who was toying with the sombre fruit which garnished his breast of canvas-back duck. Enilda went on talking.

"I am rather anxious to go to the Casino to-night, and doubly so now there is a chance of my falling in love with the Tenor; I'm afraid I've been dreadfully unfashionable. I hear of women all over the world making fools of themselves for actors and singers, yet I confess I never could understand it. Now listen! If you want to hear some of my good actions—most people's are what they have done—mine are what I have not done! Now listen! Let me see; I hope you're paying attention, Count, and you too, Mr. Florestan?"

The latter bowed, the former tossed off a glass of champagne, and replied, "As the donkey said, I'm all ears! Go on."

"Well, I never pawned my jewellery to buy J. Wilkes Booth's photograph after he murdered Lincoln. I never wanted to join a circus and jump through hoops with the bare-backed rider Stickney. I never offered to elope with Edwin Booth after seeing him in 'The Stranger.' I never ordered new volumes of Tennyson after seeing Edwin Adams in 'Enoch Arden.' I never sent a perfumed billet-doux to

compromise the character or to impair the peace of mind of the silver-voiced Brignoli."

"Nonsense! nonsense!—draw the line there," said the Count; "every woman and female child in America past the age of ten has written love-letters to Brignoli."

"You doubt my word, Count? In that case I shall say no more!"

Flora's voice came floating from the other end of the table.

"My dear Enilda, did I hear something about the silver-voiced?—the wretch!—he nearly ran over me. I was a child, and he was driving four-in-hand like any other millionaire in Saratoga. I never have forgiven him, and wouldn't if he sang high C's with the ease of Mario and Giuglini combined. Mr. Rozen, don't you think I am right?"

"Quite right, Miss Flora; quite right; still in his palmy days I suppose he wasn't bad. He's poor now, isn't he? They are all alike, those artists, especially those Italian tenors, buying the Paris Arch of Triumph for the first five years of glory, and the next twenty selling their shirts for a square meal."

Mrs. Chromo hemmed, opened and shut her fan with peculiar significance; then she looked at Flora and bestowed a peculiar glance on her lord and master, Adam Chromo.

The latter smiled gloomily.

“Better stop on the silver-voiced business, Miss Flora,” he said courageously. “This is not a case of present company excepted.”

“I suppose you mean me,” interrupted Mrs. Chromo languidly. “Yes, I must confess to a weakness for any man who lives as he lived in the ethereal world of art. He had a profession, it is true, but it was not a degrading one.” She looked her husband full in the face. “It was a career devoted to noble thoughts and aspirations; the career of music, which purifies, ennobles, and uplifts, and whilst listening to his song”—she gave her husband another severe glance—“one forgot the vulgar details of every-day life and ordinary money-grubbing.”

Adam Chromo poured himself out a glass of claret and drank it to the dregs; he felt that every eye was upon him.

“That’s a family dab for him,” whispered Flora to Mr. Rozen.

“Ordinary money-grubbing,” repeated Mrs. Chromo; “and I have every reason to believe—to judge from the quality of his voice—that he lived purely on his art alone.”

“And I,” interrupted the Count cheerily, “to believe that he lived on the world in general, and on maccaroni in particular.”

"Happily everybody knows Mr. Chromo," said Mrs. Chromo severely; "and every one—surely every one here can make allowance for his lack of enthusiasm for art and artists."

Adam Chromo began to breathe more freely. "My dear Lucy, fill your parlours with the whole Sistine Chapel if you like; it is nothing to me. My opinion is worth nothing, and one does not need to be an art dilettante in order to foot bills."

Flora spoke up. "Quite right, Mr. Chromo; nothing is more odious than pretending to know all about things that you know nothing about. I only ask my husband—when I get him—to be as amiable as you are."

The Hon. Willis Pastor sat at Flora's left; he shoved a salt-cellar towards her, and whispered under his breath:

"This is the first time I have ever heard you mention husband; you know I will do everything on earth you wish. You may have an aquarium with professional swimmers in your back drawing-room, you may have the whole of the Christy Minstrels at tea, and a list of Covent Garden singers to give you a concert every night."

Flora looked at him. "Don't give me salt," she said, "I'm not a Russian; and don't press me to

answer your question. I said you'd have to wait a month, and so you shall."

He sighed, looked down, and took a second help of sweets.

Enilda gave the signal for rising. "You men will have no time to smoke," she said, "if you want to see the first act of the play—however, that's your own look-out."

"Well," said Florestan, "I, for one, have never seen the first act of a play. Are there first acts to plays?"

"There used to be," said the Count; "but now they are only prologues."

There was a general rising, men as well as women.

"What, you are all coming!" said Enilda. "Very well; I guess you'll have time for one little cigarette while we are putting on our things." She looked laughingly round the table, and caught sight of her father's face, pale, stern, and wearing an unusual expression of anxiety.

"Excuse me," she said, passing by Florestan, and in a moment was at his side. Suddenly she turned again to her guests.

"Don't wait for me," she said. "Flora, lead the way; do, dear, I'll come directly."

"What's the matter, papa? Are you ill? Aren't you coming to the theatre with us?"

“ Well, Enilda, I’m afraid I can’t to-night.”

“ You look worried ; has anything gone wrong ?”

“ No ; nothing has gone wrong, but I’ve had a great deal to do to-day.”

“ Papa, I think it’s a shame ; you work like a slave. I shall begin to scold ; where is that man Vane ? You a silent partner !—why he’s the silent partner. Not only have I never heard the sound of his voice, but I have never laid eyes upon him. Is he still away ?”

Rozen slipped his arm round his daughter’s waist, and kissed a little curl that lay lightly on her forehead.

“ Quite right, dear, I do have too much to do ; but go to the theatre without me to-night ; I’ll chip in later, in time for supper at Delmonico’s.”

“ Well, don’t work too hard, and don’t forget to come.”

She turned away.

“ Oh, Enilda !” he called her back again, and put his thumb and finger nervously into his pocket, taking thence a card. “ Arnold gave me this just before we went in to dinner ; he said the person asked for me, and when he heard I was out he asked for you. Did you see him ? Arnold said he had been here before.”

Enilda looked at it. “ Oh, I remember,” she said ;

“ he came once before, when you were in Philadelphia, and to-day I would have seen him, but—”

Her father took the card from her fingers and crushed it in his pocket. “ You must never see him if he calls again,” he said; “ nor—nor ever speak to him if you meet him anywhere; he has no right to come here.”

“ But—do you know him, papa ? ”

“ No one knows him. I’ve seen him many times; he’s a poor half-witted creature, and really ought to be under lock and key.”

“ I must run away now. Poor old man; I’ll remember what you say. Arnold told me he thought he was half-crazy—I am glad you mentioned it, for I certainly would have seen him some time. Good-bye; I expect I shall fall in love with the new tenor.” She ran forward a few steps and then stopped. “ The supper is sure to be very nice; the Count told me of two new dishes at dinner, the latest agony for parties in the Faubourg St. Germain. I fairly wormed them out of him, for you know he’s still in deep mourning; Arnold is taking a private note to the chef while we are at the theatre. Don’t work too hard, and don’t be too late.” Then she threw him a little kiss and disappeared through the doorway.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE Casino of New York is one of the most beautiful theatres in the world. Like the better kind of American structures it has no decided style of architecture, but may safely be termed a nineteenth century *rococco*; the interior is a progressive blending of the Gothic, the Italian, Ionic, Mauresque Saracenic styles.

The eye leaves one splendid mass of gilding in gorgeous design, but to fall upon another equally gorgeous and equally splendid. Golden palms wave in arabesques, whose lightness would put to shame the airiest fancies of the Chinese pagoda; ceilings, whose blue firmaments are studded with brighter stars than ever glittered in the hackneyed empyrean, are supported by Corinthian columns, from whose base the stately palmetto rears its slender limbs, and outstretches its fan-like arms. The richness of the decorations, the velvet-hung boxes and gilded

Venetian chairs, reflect a softened light, which fairly seems to float from the crystal chandelier, giving the horse-shoe the effect of a gigantic illuminated bouquet. When the rich curtain uprolled, whether displaying a forest which might have been Arden, grottos where Undines might have sung, or balls at a prince's palace where Cinderella might have danced, the scene was of such beauty, that it was difficult to say where art began and nature left off.

Enilda and her party had three boxes thrown together on the grand tier, and arrived as the curtain went up on the first act. The usual sorcerer, villain, and peasant who becomes a prince, were going mechanically through the first scene, repeating their words without knowing what they meant, singing their music without an idea of its tone, and glancing furtively about the house to see if the friends to whom they had given free tickets were there to applaud them. The orchestra was playing in fitting strains, when suddenly the usual chorus of village maidens came forward. All pure and lowly, but dressed in point-lace petticoats, with silken hose, diamond shoe-buckles, jewelled garters, and satin frocks, appropriately accompanied by marquise rings, sapphire bracelets, rivières of brilliants, and earrings whose stones were fitting rivals of the Regent, all provided—needless to say—out of the modest salary

of two guineas weekly. These young ladies, whose voices were fresher than those of reeds sighing in a river, jumped about with amazing lightness, bestowed frequent gratuitous smiles on the bald-headed first and second and the dudes of the third and fourth rows, and as a slender youth glided gracefully forward, mechanically fell back into their places, on one sustained indescribable upper B flat.

His large black eyes looked like almond loops of velvet; ringlets of soft black hair clung graciously to a marble forehead; coral lips opened lightly over teeth of pearl, whence a voice floated forth like a Mario's; one hand rested lightly on the jewelled hilt of a sword, whilst one, a rainbow of light, stretched from a fall of priceless lace, and waving gently back and forth, anon seemed to send out the sound as it escaped from his lips, anon to bring it back to that fount whose source was inexhaustible.

As the youth appeared the house burst into wild applause. He stopped abruptly; the leader held his bâton in the air, till the star signified his intention of going on. He languidly rolled his eyes to heaven, waved the rainbow of light in the conductor's face, the reception ended, and the song concluded.

The Count whispered to Enilda. "There he is ! what do you think of him ?"

Mrs. Chromo sighed. "Oh, he is too sweet !" she

said. Florestan looked at Enilda; she opened her fan and returned his look inquiringly.

“What am I to say?” she hazarded. “You know I was to be his latest victim. Am I to be struck *foudroyée*, as the French say, all at once?—or am I to fall in love by gentle stages?”

“The question is how you feel,” said Florestan, “whether or no you believe in love at first sight.”

“Ah, that, Mr. Florestan, is a leading question.”

“Hush!” said Mrs. Chromo; “how can you talk whilst he is singing?”

The Count came nearer and whispered in Enilda’s ear: “They say Howard has ordered a new box of diamond rings, so that his admirers may have a new choice; you know he has one every night. You watch the bouquets as they come on, and you’ll see a square piece of white paper, fastened tight to the holder; well, in that paper lies a jewelled gaud.”

At that moment the singer approached their box and cast a respectful glance of recognition at Mrs. Chromo. Flora noticed it; all noticed it in the box; in fact, its discretion and unobtrusiveness were such that everybody noticed it.

“Lucy,” said Enilda, gently tapping her on the elbow; “I believe I feel the throes working in me. Can this be love?”

Lucy gently squeezed her hand. “You’re a dear,”

she said. "Make the Count ask him to supper, when he goes behind to speak to the ballet-girls."

"Ah!" said the Count, "I am the protector of the New York Terpsichorean Academy. I am father, mother, brother, even choreographer if need be; but the young lady I am especially looking after, you will see in the *Prima Donna*; she is due about now."

"Why, Count, you talk of her as if she were the lightning express," said Flora.

"Well, she is just about that," he replied. "She's a charming girl, I assure you all. Ah! here she comes."

A young woman in tangled hair and high-heeled boots here bounded on to the stage. She slapped the tenor on the back, chucked the sorcerer under the chin, and scowled at the villain. The Count, being in mourning, slightly retired behind the curtain, produced a black-bordered handkerchief sadly perfumed with violet, and gracefully drew it across his forehead, the while the *Prima Donna* was screaming in a series of drunken chromatics with a voice sharp enough to cut glass, and an accent which savoured of the Rhine, "The freer I am, the happier I am." She got to the end of the *andante*, and started a *cadenza*, but there was evidently some trouble in the orchestra. The soprano went one way, the flutes another; one first violin

stopped short, and a second first was seen to drop his instrument, turn frightfully pale, and put his hand to his mouth with an attitude painfully suggestive of a Trans-Atlantic steamer in a heavy gale. The Prima Donna glared into the orchestra, and with wicked readiness cut the lyrics of the first measure and the final cadenza; then a few words were heard in an undertone from the leader, the hiatus was filled up, and the opera went on.

Before any one could ask or understand what it all meant, the stage was filled with well-to-do bandits, the Prima Donna flung herself into the arms of the velvet-eyed tenor, and was as quickly torn from them by the villain. A witch came through a rock in the depths of the forest and myriads of beautiful nymphs appeared sporting on the green. The dark-eyed young tenor fell into the arms of an unknown pirate, who suddenly appeared in the flies, the while the beautiful maiden, the Prima Donna, was borne away struggling in the arms of two giants of haughty mien. The curtain fell to thunders of applause. The artists reappeared in repeated acknowledgment; the young tenor bowed with courtly grace to the box in the right. The curtain redescended, and the entr'acte was fairly under weigh.

There was a breath of relief, and the theatre soon re-echoed to the hum of lively and incessant chatter.

“ Well,” said the Count, “ I must say that finale was disgraceful; I wonder Signorina Foresti could ever get through with it. I will go on the stage and see what it was all about.”

“ Don’t forget, Count! Enilda, you know”—Mrs. Chromo’s voice was sweetly insinuating.

Enilda spoke quickly. “ Why, of course, give my special compliments to Mr. Cherubini, and tell him how charmed we shall be if he will join us at supper.”

The Count went out; Flora and young Pastor began to talk in a corner; Mrs. Chromo took up her opera-glass to look at the house; Adam Chromo followed her example, and Florestan came and sat beside Enilda.

“ It is a delightful theatre,” he said; “ do you like the opera ? ”

“ Why, I can make neither head nor tail out of it so far; I suppose he carries her off in the end; and in the mean time—”

“ And in the mean time ” echoed Enilda, “ she is powdering her nose, and he is changing his diamond rings. I remember my illusions about the theatre.”

“ You once told me you had no illusions.”

“ Ah, did I ? Well, I certainly have few about the stage. I was one night at the opera in Paris sitting in a stage-box with the composer and a daughter of the

great Lablache. The opera was 'Romeo and Juliet.' Heilbron and Capoul were playing. I made sure they were in love with each other. When they came to the farewell duet, you know, where the nightingale sings, Romeo hung on to a rope ladder on the balcony, when Juliet with heart-broken accents threw her arms round his neck, struggled, and in a distinct voice sung not the wife's but the Hebrew's lament, 'Decidedly I can only give you seven hundred francs for those costumes.' The composer nearly fainted as he explained there had been a row in the theatre that day between the tenor and soprano about the question of some braid, which had cost five sous a yard. You see Romeo was the director, and thought braid at three sous was good enough, but Juliet wouldn't have it because her predecessor's had cost four sous, and she determined to have braid which cost one sou more or die."

"And how did they settle the question?" said Florestan.

"Oh, Shylock wasn't in it with the Prima Donna. But the composer excused her, because, he said, having no voice, and less talent than other artists, she was at least bound to have better clothes. Now I never sit very near the stage; that lesson cost me too dear."

"Enilda," cried Flora, "what do you think Mr.

Pastor has just been telling me? He knows six Duchesses of the same name in England—Duchess Dowager, the Duke's three divorced wives, the deceased brother's widow, and the present Duke's fourth wife—and all these ladies took tea with his grandmother, who was just out of mourning for her fifth husband."

"Impossible," exclaimed Florestan.

"Oh, nothing is impossible in England," said Enilda; "remember Henry VIII. had six wives."

"My God!" said Adam Chromo, dropping his glass; "thank Heaven there is no royal blood in my veins."

"Adam," said his wife, "you've grown religious all of a sudden; you've taken to thanking Him much too often. There's no occasion to have royal blood in your veins; but if, like myself, you were the descendant of a 'Mayflower' descendant, you'd have some satisfaction in feeling that at least, if your blood wasn't royal, it was bluer than that of most people about the farm."

Adam Chromo shrugged his shoulders and was about to respond, when the door opened, and the Count came back to the box.

"It's the most outrageous treatment I ever heard off," he blurted out; "you never would believe what I'm going to tell you, but it is a positive fact.

That Musical Trades' Union is a disgrace to any country."

"My dear Count," said Enilda, "pray explain; what can have so excited you?"

"I hope they haven't done anything to hurt Cherubini's feelings," said Mrs. Chromo.

"What on earth has happened, Count?" said Flora. "You burst into the box like a squall bursting over a canoe on Lake Michigan. Mr. Pastor, will you kindly give me that box of chocolates? To judge from the Count's face, we are going to hear something terrible, and I may as well brace up beforehand with a few sweets."

"You'd better take my seat next Miss Rozen, Count!" said Florestan, "and sit a little in the shade, for if any one catches sight of your face there'll be a panic; they'll think the house is on fire, or some dire calamity—"

"Calamity!—dire calamity!" interrupted the Count dropping into Florestan's seat, and waving his violet-scented handkerchief with imperious scorn. "It's not only a calamity, but I say an outrage. Now listen, for I'm going to tell you the affair clean through. This is the whole story in a nutshell. I met the *Prima Donna*, Ida Forrester—"

"Ida Forrester!" cried Enilda and Flora in a breath. "Why, that's the girl we went to school

with at the Well-born Seminary! I thought you called her Foresti just now," added Flora.

"So I did, but Foresti is her stage name." Whilst Enilda was thinking to herself: "And that is the Western drug-clerk's daughter!—who did not think me good enough to speak to in school, because I did not wear bracelets and a gold watch and chain. But how has the Western Forrester become the noble Signora Foresti?"

Poor Enilda! She little knew that Italianizing a name, going from a poor to a high-sounding title, is the easiest scale to ascend in the musical profession. The Count continued:

"Well, as I said, I met the *Prima Donna* in the first fly; she'd just been attending the second violinist, poor boy, who was ill. 'Go and see him,' she cried; 'Providence sends you; I can't speak German and you can, and he can't speak one word of English.' Well, I went to him, and it seems—well, to put it plainly, he was still sea-sick. Don't look shocked, ladies, but he had thrown up everything except his courage to keep his engagement to-night. It seems he only arrived this afternoon in the second-class steerage from Hamburg. He has been deadly ill all the way over, and the first thing he did when he arrived was to do what all the German musicians do—sell his old violin at the dock, and take in

exchange a nice new fiddle of green wood, worth about thirteen dollars, and a few more gulden in money. Then with a letter in his pocket he started off to find the head of the Musical Trades' Union. The man who bought his fiddle told him to lose no time, for reasons which you shall see. He found the chief in, who, on learning that he could read music at sight, and had played first fiddle in a band at Carlsruhe, said, 'My boy, you're in luck, you're just the man I want. You shall be the substitute of my friend Mr. Ratsbane in the Casino orchestra this very night; I will give you twenty-five cents for your trouble.' You see he was to be the substitute for twenty-five cents; and as any member of the Musical Trades' Union has a right to send any kind of substitute at a moment's notice, why, you see, Ratsbane just collared five dollars for twenty-five cents, and sent this sick boy to take his place; and I suppose, in the mean time, the former has an engagement to play at some beer-garden or midnight-supper; that will add a few more dollars to the chief store. So this poor boy comes at a moment's notice —hasn't even time to get any dinner—comes into the orchestra with a fiddle he has never played upon before, and has to read manuscript music he has never seen before; consequence—what you've probably never heard before."

“And you mean to say,” demanded Enilda indignantly, “that such things can be in a civilized community? Outrage!—why it ought to be published to-morrow morning in every newspaper of New York. I hope you’ll *expose the—*”

“Expose him,” reiterated the Count; “on the contrary, I shall do everything I can to hush it up. I’m of German birth, and it reflects much more on me than on any one else. First violins have to put up with everything in the Old World; seconds can’t expect any better treatment in the New. I’m never for interfering with co-operations, and especially with Trades’ Unions. The little hair I have on my head I want to keep, and I have no desire to be found floating on the slime of the Charles river, instead of sleeping peacefully with my ancestors in the family vault at Schonbrunn. I have no wish to throw the Austrian Imperial Court into mourning through any ill-advised defence on my part of individual itinerant emigrants.”

Mrs. Chromo shuddered. “How horrible!” she said; “don’t speak of such a thing.” In imagination she already saw not only her own Chromo-literary society, but the first society of all Gotham, denuded of its one bright and particular star; the eventuality was too appalling. She opened her fan before her eyes as if to shut out the dreadful vision.

"The orchestra are coming in," said Florestan ; "but I don't see the substitute."

"Oh, tell us more, do, Count !" cried Flora eagerly ; "you've lots of time before the overture. Enilda, dear, these caramels are perfectly delicious, but I think I'll try a few of these raisins glacées. Brat makes them quite as well as that man in North Wells Street in Chicago."

"Well, as you insist!" continued the Count. "There isn't much more to say, except that when I don't insult co-operations, I don't often insult individuals. The best kindness to persons like the substitute is to give them a genteel letting alone ; you can't help them, and simply have the entire Trades' Union down upon both them and yourself. I've seen as many as six subs in the theatre on one evening—such subs too!—hard on the composer, wasn't it ?"

"And his fiddle," said Enilda ; "the bands all play well enough, but I suppose this little transaction you have just mentioned explains the scraping sound peculiar to the American orchestras, and you hear it from Thomas's down.

"Poor lad !" said Florestan. "Ah, there's the curtain."

"I hope," said the Count, hastily turning to the latter, "that you won't mention what I've said here

about the Trades' Unions, and especially the German musicians; it wouldn't do for me, you know, closely allied as I am to the German and Austrian Imperial families,—it wouldn't do! Alas! we pay a heavy price for our nobility! Words which amount to nothing coming from other people, from us carry tremendous weight. I may praise my country's Johannisburgher, but I cannot dispraise the villain who robs me in the vat."

"Well," said Adam Chromo, shaking himself, "I never before realized what it is to be a free and independent American citizen."

"But, my dear sir, you are not a free and independent American citizen. You never dare mention glue to anybody," said his wife, interrupting him.

"It's not a question of what I dare to do, but what I care to do," retorted her husband. Then he stopped suddenly, for the band broke in, and music put a stop as it usually does to the general conversation.

The opera went on, dragging out three acts in a gorgeous panoply of stage pictures, the plot becoming more and more incomprehensible as the music became more and more recognizable. For the composer, an enterprising youth, although born without any especial talent, had had the luck to be born after Rossini, Donizetti, Bellini, and Balfe, and like

all the composers of the present day, happily knew how to benefit by it. In operatic parlance this modern heritage is called musical reminiscence. The librettist had been in his fashion equally happy—having had the entire repertory of classics to draw upon for situations, from the wood scene in the ‘Faithful Shepherdess,’ and Romani’s lyrics, to the ‘Gendre de M. Poirier,’ or Meilhac’s graceful metricals, divorced, alas! but too irrevocably divorced, from Offenbach’s merry measures.

“I delight in this opera,” said Enilda; “I’ve heard nearly all my favourite melodies since we sat down.”

“Ah, yes!” said Flora. “Listen, as the man said when he woke up and found himself in jail, ‘I dreamt that I dwelt in marble halls.’”

“Well,” said the Count, “I’m not one of those people who are hunting for reminiscences. A good thing is a good thing anywhere; but I confess I was staggered when I recognized in ‘*Salve dimora*’ the andante of one of Beethoven’s Concertos, taken body and bones, and the ‘*Chanson de Fortunio*,’ which as we all know is from Spohr’s ‘*Jessonda*,’ the tempo changed perhaps, but I’ll swear not one of the notes. One night when Bill and I had a little music at the Palace—of course you know who I mean—His Majesty and so forth—Offenbach said to me, ‘How do you like that?—my new song,

the Chanson of—and so forth ?' Well, Bill wouldn't have had the courage, but I had. I said to O., 'Do I like it ? Why, it's the oldest friend I have in music --Spohr.' Then the wily dog ran his fingers up and down the piano in a brilliant arpeggio. 'Oh !' he replied, shutting his blue eyes and looking modestly at his hands, 'you recognize it ? *Mais n'est ce pas que je l'ai bien hubillé ?*' "

"Count," said Mrs. Chromo, "I wouldn't have your memory for anything ; I should have no more pleasure or enjoyment in life."

"What can have become of papa ?" said Enilda, half to herself.

The Count turned to Mrs. Chromo. "My memory —oh yes, you would, if you also had my friends ;" and he gave Lucy one of his most flattering smiles.

"Enilda," said Flora, "why should we wait for the very end of the opera ? If the lovers are reconciled it will be all right any way, and if they're not, I don't want to assist at any such unhappy affair."

"As you will," said Enilda rising.

Mrs. Chromo made a little grimace. "Oh, not wait till the end !—and the Tenor has such a divine phrase just here !"

Enilda re-seated herself. "He's singing it now," interrupted Lucy, "and after those few bars we may as well go."

"Is he coming to supper with us, Count?" asked Enilda quickly.

"Bless my soul," said De Marcie. "He's tickled to death of course to come, and as soon as he has taken off his make-up—"

"Oh, delightful!" ejaculated Lucy. "See, the curtain is just coming down, so we haven't missed anything; but how are we all going to Del's?"

"The way we came," said Flora cheerily.

Florestan looked imploringly at Enilda; she understood his glance. "Well, as papa hasn't turned up, Mr. Florestan, suppose you give me an arm?"

"Oh, Miss Flora," said Mr. Pastor eagerly, "will you give me a lift?"

"Nonsense," said Mrs. Chromo; "do you leave me to go alone with my husband to a restaurant? Scandalous; worse than the Santerre affair in Paris, and the cabinet particulier."

"Mrs. Chromo," said the Count; "may I be your cavalier servante?" Then he smiled a wicked smile, and clapped his gibus firmly under his left arm.

"Poor Mr. Chromo, left entirely alone! Well, I'll take you with me! You needn't look glum, Willis Pastor; I suppose you saw a fine opportunity for a quiet flirtation on the way to Del's."

Adam Chromo laughed good-humouredly. "Thanks, Flora, but I wouldn't have it on my conscience to

spoil your tête-à-tête, besides, I want to walk, and have a quiet smoke."

Life-long gratitude leapt from young Pastor's eyes.

"You're too sweet," he said to Flora in an undertone as he gave her a little nudge.

As they reached the crush-room Enilda stopped a moment to speak to and congratulate the director of the theatre, a tall, broad-shouldered, dark-eyed, handsome man, ex-Colonel in the Confederate Service, who had smelt powder and tasted grape-shot, from Bull's Run to Gettysburg; he retained his title, which rank he had bravely won and still bravely wore! He stood surrounded by a concourse of people, and received his honours and congratulations with much the same manner as the Member for Midlothian, when, after one of his rhetorical outbursts, he has exhausted his country's but not his constituents' patience.

What a crowd there was to be sure! Enilda's head scarcely ceased nodding, not even when she stepped into her carriage.

"Were she mine I should still have to dispute her with half New York," thought Florestan; then he took his seat beside her and they drove off.

Flora followed with Mr. Pastor; but Mrs. Chromo was still standing on the wide staircase, her rich robes trailing gracefully on the pure marble steps, her voice

loudest and merriest amidst the cheerful cosmopolitan hum. "He is perfection," she was heard to say, and she enthusiastically lifted one tiny gloved hand; "he's perfection, and is just now coming round to supper with us at Delmonico's." She was still speaking of the Tenor, and holding forth on his grace and charms.

CHAPTER IX.

WHO that has ever heard of New York has not heard of Delmonico's, one of the most delightful restaurants in the world, where Gotham breakfasts, dines, sups, and even dances, to her heart's content? many of the smartest balls and parties are given in this spacious house, even by Gotham's best? She can boast of magnificent dancing-halls, superb mansions, and series of apartments which would not disgrace Versailles, but the fashion exists for people to receive their guests at a restaurant, the same as it exists for the best of New York to shut up magnificent houses in the winter time, to live, say rather board, at hotels. It will never be known whether for the doubtful delights of the table-d'hôte, called society, or whether from a spirit of enterprise peculiar to the American mind. Still the fact remains,—it is done, and probably will continue to be done, as long as New York sits throned on her solitary isle.

It must not be imagined that because Delmonico's is as French as the Café Anglais in one sense, it resembles that or any of the Paris restaurants in any other; on the contrary, its morals are as perfumed as its mushrooms, and its virtues as celebrated as its vintage; unlike most modern descendants of ancient class, it inherits all the good qualities and none of the vices of its ancestors. Three may occupy any cabinet particulier, but two never; women may come alone to luncheon, but not to dinner; and a famishing mother and daughter could no more be refreshed after six P.M., than a model husband and wife could have supper together in a private room at midnight.

The ground-floor, a spacious, gorgeous apartment looking out on Fifth Avenue and Twenty-sixth Street, brilliant with light, fresco, gilding, and colour, was already filled almost to repletion, and in the hall beside the lift stood one of the smiling proprietors holding a *levée*, as it were, at the foot of his own staircase, and chatting cordially with the smartest people who passed by.

As Enilda approached the gentleman saluted her with a friendly and cordial yet courteous air, whilst Florestan stretched out his hand with a smile and said :

“Good evening, Charley; got some one in there

to look after us all right?" then passed on between a defile of correct waiters, who threw black shadows some distance from the doorway, to a superbly-decorated table, which occupied a conspicuous place in the angle nearest the street.

"Ah, here's papa!" said Enilda; and Mr. Rozen came forward to greet his daughter.

"Sha'n't I scold him, Mr. Florestan, for not coming to the theatre?" and she placed her hand lightly on her father's arm. "I missed you so much. It was a lovely performance!—and I'm starving to death. Have you been waiting long?"

"Only about five minutes. I couldn't get to the theatre. Ah! here are the rest of the party; we can begin our supper at once," and he began seating his guests.

"Heavens upon earth! give me a glass of champagne, do," said Mrs Chromo. "The Count has been telling me such stories coming down; he was so witty; he said such good things."

"Count, I thought you never forgot yourself," said Flora laughing.

"And I never do," he replied gaily. "I suppose I say many good things, but I never know it myself."

"And I have always insisted it's that way with genius," said Mrs. Chromo. "It's what Professor Protoplasm calls unconscious celebration."

Every one looked at Lucy. There was an awkward pause.

“Shall I be your Boswell ?” said Pastor, turning to the Count.

“Who on earth was Boswell ?” interrupted Lucy. “Oh, I know ; something about a battle-field. But, heavens ! how hungry I am ; the only carnage I shall go in for to-night will be a slaughter of those birds. Enilda, ain’t you starved to death ? Music like that takes it out of one, I must say. But where is Adam ?—he hasn’t turned up yet. I suppose he’s gone off to hunt up his partner, his silent partner, perhaps.”

At that moment Florestan and Rozen both raised their heads. Instinctively they glanced at each other. Rozen’s face was pale, but his gaze was unfaltering. Florestan was the first to turn away his eyes.

“It’s a strange affair,” he thought ; “we’re no farther ahead than we were. I wonder when Vane is coming back ? I can’t have any misgivings, because I think it right that Rozen should know what a wretch his partner is.”

His reverie was interrupted by a little shriek from Mrs. Chromo. Every one looked up. A graceful youth, followed by Adam Chromo and Professor Protoplasm, were advancing towards them. The Tenor was presented, and compliments flowed as

freely as champagne. He was placed at Mrs. Chromo's right at table. Soon the party were eating, drinking, and chatting merrily.

"Tell me," said Enilda, with ingenuous curiosity, "is it true that artists can do nothing that they want to?—that they are perfect slaves?—that they can neither eat, drink, sleep, dance, nor amuse themselves as they like?—that they have to take care of themselves on every possible occasion?—that they can't accept luncheons, or teas, or dinners, and rarely suppers?—and that their lives from the cradle to the grave, that is to say, from their homes to the theatre, are one long self-sacrifice?—that all their time is spent in studying, practising scales, rehearsing parts, and taking care of their throats. I have heard that all great singers have been slaves to their voices. Is it true?"

"True! Oh dear me no!" said the Tenor with a little musical laugh, rolling heavenward his velvety black eyes. "It used to be so, no doubt; but all that is an exploded idea. Now-a-days the actor or singer has social pre-occupations and pretensions that he never used to have, so, of course, art must take care of itself. Do nothing we want to! Why, my dear Miss Rozen, we're the only people in the world who do everything we want to. Society is now a slave to the artist, not the artist to society. I

eat, drink, sleep, dance, and amuse myself in every way I want; and as to taking care of myself, why New York takes care of me, simply kills me with kindness. As to luncheons, teas, dinners, suppers, and so forth, well! I am simply overwhelmed with invitations, most of which I certainly make a point of accepting. Now, I would not have missed this occasion for anything! I never study; I loathe practising scales; I never need to rehearse, I wouldn't even if I needed to; and my voice is always the same,—do what I may; especially anything that pleases me has never been known to hurt my voice."

"Delightful!" said Enilda. "This is indeed an age of progress; and what an improvement on the old system."

"Dear me!" cried Mrs. Chromo. "I don't know anything of what was and is, I only beg of you to do nothing that could injure that precious—Pray don't be imprudent."

Cherubini laughed lightly, and quaffed a glass of Extra Dry.

"Electra is particularly bright this evening," professed Professor Protoplasm. "We are expecting a great many friends over for the Transit of Venus."

"Transit of Venus!" said Flora. "I'm up in astronomy: when's that coming off? Enilda, we ought to make up a party for the Observatory."

"It is several years hence," said the Professor pathetically.

"Yes; we may all be dead by that time," said Mrs. Chromo. "I think the best salad I've ever tasted is this salad Del makes. Eat freely of it, Adam; as George Augustus Sala once said of a similar Russian dish, 'There's death in a teaspoonful.'"

"I suppose you'll all laugh?" said Rozen, "but when the Professor said, 'Transit of Venus,' I thought he referred to a new mine going to be sprung on us. Upon my soul I did."

"Papa, how can you?" said Enilda laughing. "I shall immediately drink to your increase of knowledge on the astronomy question."

"Well, Mr. Rozen, you can extend your knowledge if you like," said Mrs. Chromo. "My firmament is the stage, and the only stars I care about are theatrical stars."

"Good!" said Florestan. "I propose Mr. Cherubini's health."

A general clinking of glasses followed. There were many supper-tables in the room, but none apparently so gay as this. It seemed as if all Gotham's best had given one general rendezvous at Delmonico's on that particular evening. Enilda nodded to a dozen friends here and there, while as many more came up to speak to her. Mr. Rozen kept adding to his

invitations, and one by one the number of guests at the table increased, until Enilda could scarcely move without a morsel of her frock or a hand or an arm touching Florestan.

He scarcely regretted the overflowing company. Adam Chromo was evidently pondering the theatrical business.

“Lucy!” he said abruptly. “You’re so gone now on the theatre, how about your Chromo-Literary Society? Have you forgotten all about that?”

Flora nudged Pastor. “I believe Adam Chromo is jealous of the Tenor.” Then she opened out her fan against her cheek, thus hiding not alone her own but Pastor’s face from view. He gave her an indescribable look.

Lucy Chromo answered her husband with a smile of unusual acrimony. “‘Spouse adored,’ as Eve sings in the ‘Creation,’ and always out of tune, I never forget anything, and our very next meeting is to be at the Count’s; it is to be a most important one too.”

“Electing new members, or directors, or what?” inquired Mr. Rozen politely.

“Directors; dear, no!” said Florestan. “As I understand it, this is the only reasonable society in existence; its members and directors are, like the French Senate, elected for life.”

Professor Protoplasm sighed. "What a difference there is in Republics," he said; "here, in the greatest of all Republics, your senators and members are elected for such short terms, that not as much importance as should be is attached to so high an office."

"High!" said Rozen. "It's 'high, low, Jack and the game,' as they say in playing Old Sledge. As there are neither members nor senators present at this table, I may remark that for some of the men we've had on the top notch, it's a very good job they were only elected for four or five years; they've stolen enough as it is. Fancy what it would have been had they been there for life!"

"The country would have been pawned to England," said Florestan shortly.

"Dear me," said the Count, reflectively heaping his glass full of cracked ice, "everything is relative with one exception. You can't compare American politics with foreign politics any more than you can compare American politicians with foreign politicians, or the Capitol at Washington with the French Senate at Versailles. Here it is a question of money, and there a question of honour."

"Perhaps you're right," interrupted Florestan, "in one sense at least. There a man is elected for life, and his life's work is laid out before him. He is

usually so old when he is finally elected, there is little chance of his making anything beyond a name, the only property he will hand down to posterity."

"While here," put in Adam Chromo, irreverently, "a young man is made the tool of his party, sent to Washington as a stop-gap, knowing he may be kicked out as soon as a more unscrupulous figure looms up; he'll get the G. B., classic for grand bounce, and as he is sure to retire covered with insult and opprobrium, the least he can do is to collar all he can lay his hands on in the mean time. Honour!—why, an American politician is taking Martha Washington down to dinner to-night, and driving a Broadway bus tomorrow."

"Hip, hurrah!" said Rozen; "them's my sentiments."

"What is your opinion, Miss Enilda?" said the Count, politely.

"My opinion!" she responded. "What about? The French Senate, Washington politics, collaring all they can get, and handing not their probity, but their property down to posterity? Well, frankly, I haven't any opinion. And there are two things I never discuss—women's rights and politics. The former have all the rights they ought to have, and more than they know how to employ well; and the latter—"

“And the latter?” interrupted Florestan.

“And the latter,” said Flora, “are beneath any respectable woman’s notice.”

“Hear, hear!” said Florestan.

“It’s a lovely night,” said Mrs. Chromo, peering out through the plate-glass windows, on to the Avenue and Madison Square beyond, filled by a pale moonlight which sets forth every object with noonday distinctness.

“It reminds me of Venice,” said the Count; “Venice, not a city, but a dream.” He sighed as if in tender memory of a tender past.

“Nonsense,” said Mrs. Chromo. “I think it’s high time all this romance about Venice and those old cities should be exploded; Venice may have been a dream once, but when I saw it, it was a nightmare.”

“I agree with you,” said Flora. “Now, look at Naples, for instance; they say objects become bright by being brightly shone upon. Of course, the same rule works both ways. The sky has been so long reflecting the filth of Naples, that instead of the streets becoming purer they have become dirtier. There are few flowers, and those few amazing. They smell bad, and bloom withered. What can it be,—a too ardent sun?”

“No; a too ardent civilization,” said the Count.

“Progress will kill Italy. The B.C. epoch was really more in its line.”

“Dreadful!” laughed Enilda. “Happily you can say nothing against Rome; even the wildest heretic cannot parody the Eternal City!”

“Well,” said Flora, “I don’t know what you call parodying; but if there was a comical side to anything in Rome I saw it.”

“As to that,” said Enilda, “they say there is but a step between the sublime and the ridiculous. When I was looking into the ‘Foro Trajano’ I could see no past, only a present—of three or four hundred cats.”

“Nonsense,” said Florestan; “I can’t believe that.”

“I assure you it’s true,” she said. “This ancient Forum serves the same purpose for cats as the New York pound does for stray dogs; every stray cat found in the streets of Rome is thrown into this place, and——”

“The poor things!” cried Mrs. Chromo. “I hate cats; but how do they live?”

“Live,” echoed Enilda; “oh, they live very well. In the afternoon all the noble populace, women and children, dukes, nurses, and everybody come to feed them; it’s a curious sight. When I first looked down into the place I thought I saw things moving. Whether I was too imbued with the spirit of the past

or not, I did not know; but not a bit of it,—not headless trunks and bodiless heads were jumping about, but hundreds of cats, fat, thin, long, short, scraggy, and some positive skeletons; some creeping along under the dark arches, some with bright eyes peering out at me from holes in the wall, whilst others were gleefully running round the broken slabs, playing like Juliet with their forefathers' joints."

"Perhaps the bones of the early Christians," suggested Mrs. Chromo; "and all with a cheery, eager, expectant look, did you say? Chromo, why didn't you show me that when I was in Rome?"

"Because it wasn't there then," answered her husband.

"Wasn't there," echoed Flora, aghast. "What can you be thinking of, Mr. Chromo? Do you mean the Forum or the cats? We are told the former was built B.C., and, by the way, who knows where the first cat came from?"

"We are told anything now-a-days, but don't ask me to believe it," said Adam Chromo. "If we could only settle our credulity as we do our board bills in these foreign show towns, it would be a good job. Don't ask me where the first cat came from; that's more in Protoplasm's line; but I can tell you where the last one would go to if I found it starring

on my premises." And he made a movement with his two fingers which might be made by any poult erer in a back-yard on a sunny morning.

"Adam," said Mrs. Chromo, "I think you've had champagne enough."

"Oh, nonsense!" cried Mr. Rozen. "I think we'll want more if the Professor is going to tell us the origin of cats."

The Professor looked humble, but happy. "The world is so ignorant," he began slowly; "no one really knows when the first cat, or '*felis cattus domestica*,' to give it its right name, appeared. Professor Owen has advanced many theories, and many think that we ought to look for its origin with the rushes on the banks of the Nile."

"Heavens! Professor," cried the Count. "Are we to sit here while you go as far back as that?"

"We couldn't sit in a better place," said Florestan; "but tell me," he said in a lower tone to Enilda, "did you not find Italy the divinest place in the world? I should like to see it again—with you. Is Italy more beautiful in its past than in its present? Does one go there to recall—"

Her face assumed a scornful expression, and a bitter light came into her eyes.

"I can't say," she said, coldly; "I know I went there to forget it."

He started; this was twice she had spoken of forgetting—had she any reason? His heart stirred within him, and a spasm of indescribable jealousy sent the quick blood leaping madly through every vein. She never looked at him, but lifted her glass, and seemed intently to study the crystal liquid which kept bubbling from the centre of the vase, as waters bubble from the heart of a mountain cascade.

Florestan sighed. “I shall never see it again unless I see it with you,” said he, and then stopped abruptly, for the Count laid a heavy hand on Mr. Rozen’s arm, and his face wore a startled, terrified look. Every one stared in amazement, whilst Rozen drew himself up, and looked at De Marcie in haughty surprise; but on noting the latter’s agonized look, his own face assumed an expression of a sympathetic alarm.

“For God’s sake, what is the matter? Are you ill?” he exclaimed.

The Count quickly recovered his composure, and his eyes lost their distended look.

“Oh, it’s nothing,” he said faintly. “I—I’ve been subject to these attacks lately; it may be the heart. I am subject to these attacks; my uncle went off that way.”

“Tut, tut, nonsense!” said Chromo, briskly. “More likely it’s indigestion.”

"Iced pineapple is so cold at midnight," said Flora; "you know the old adage about fruit being gold in the morning, silver at noon, etcetera."

"Here—you'd better drink this," said Florestan, quickly giving him a glass of brandy.

"Ah," said Cherubini, looking round and bowing pleasantly to a lady who had entered unperceived with a party of friends, and sat supping at a distant table; "it's the *Prima Donna* with her new companion."

"Why, sure enough," said Mrs. Chromo, who sat on the same side of the table as the Count; "I needn't turn my head to look at them, as I can see the whole party plainly in the looking-glass opposite."

"Flora," said Enilda, "do you suppose she remembers us? I don't think I shall ever forget her."

"I should think not indeed," responded Flora. "Times have changed since the school, haven't they? I guess it's your turn now to wear bracelets and sport silk dresses."

Florestan looked wonderingly at Enilda. She explained as she gave the signal for rising.

"You see that was when I was a poor little girl at school, and only a miner's daughter."

She was drawing on her gloves. "I hope you feel better, Count"—she turned to him politely.

"Oh! quite well now, thanks; indeed I'm all right, I assure you," he responded; but his face belied his words. It was still pale, drawn, and anxious.

Lucy Chromo looked up from a rendezvous she was making with the Tenor.

"Oh dear! Count, I hope you're not going to be ill,—and now about our next literary meeting? Shall we come the day after to-morrow, as was arranged?"

"By all means," he said hastily. "Three sharp, and dinner afterwards."

The night air was chilly.

"I sincerely hope you'll not suffer from this evening, sir."

"Indeed, no. I have enjoyed myself immensely."

Mr. Rozen had addressed his distinguished guest with more than usual courtesy.

By this time all reached the outer door.

"I must say Electra holds her own," said the Professor; "it's such a clear night I think I shall go on to the Observatory." No one offered to accompany him. "And with reference to the origin of cats," he continued, "I'm glad you spoke of it. I shall now prepare a paper for one of our meetings, in which I shall hope to elucidate some hitherto extremely doubtful points. Ah, the world is very ignorant—very ignorant."

Florestan was putting Enilda into her carriage. "Good-night," he said tenderly; "shall I see you to-morrow? You're spoiling me, but you know I threatened some time past that not a day should pass without your seeing me; you know it is one of the privileges of friendship to be tyrannical."

CHAPTER X.

THE Count sat alone in the richly-furnished flat in Twenty-eight Street; it was the second day following the supper, yet he still looked a little pale. He wore an Oriental smoking suit, with an embroidered fez on his head, and his feet were encased in Turkish slippers. The day was bitterly cold, and a biting mid winter wind was sweeping across New York, stirring the young leaves in Central Park, even ruffling the feathers of the white swans who sailed so timidly on the pretty inland lakes. Although it was fairly late, the Count's heavy window-curtains were drawn; a single jet of gas gleamed strangely yellow through the white globe, and a candelabra with shaded waxen tapers was placed on a table, heaped with papers, drawn beside the Count's arm-chair, his feet reposed on the fender, and the smoke from a Turkish cigarette curled in light rings in the air above his head. He was handling some of the

papers, and his face wore a very cynical, sinister look.

"It beats the devil," he muttered, as he fumbled them over, "how she can have turned up in America after all these years." He opened some letters, old and musty with age. "But can it be she? I thought I'd left her in a place that she wouldn't get out of in a hurry. Oh, I'll be bound it is. I thought it was about time my luck was changing. I've been prosperous so many years there must be a change, I feel it in the air, just as Westerners know when a cyclone is coming, or a rheumaticky man knows when it is going to rain."

Then he read his letters over, lit a fresh cigarette, pondered and smoked for some little time in silence; suddenly he broke out. The Count had a bad habit of talking to himself; it was as if he needed words, his unspoken thoughts were not distinguished enough to keep him proper company.

"I wonder if she has kept my letters," he said, and then he laughed ironically. "Naturally she has kept them for the same reason that I have kept hers—none at all. Women like Adèle don't throw away letters. Strange," he continued, as he turned over the pages, reading aloud at hazard. "'My beloved, fate has thrown us together for better or for worse.' Faugh! it's positively sickening, to think

how I used to wait for her notes, re-read them a hundred times, hang on every word she said, and be ready to—" He stopped abruptly, and looked around, folded the papers in his hand, jumped up, at the same time brushing away some ashes which had fallen on his trousers, and went towards the door. "I thought I heard some one," he muttered; "I must break myself of that nasty trick of talking aloud. I don't think Sharpe can have been listening; he well knows an unusual foot-fall would cost him his place; I think I'll put them away." He took up the letters. "Now she's as dead to me as if she had never been. By gad! she isn't though: I wish she were."

He went towards an oaken cabinet, or chest, in a corner of the room, and opened a secret lock with a golden key which hung to his watch-chain. He threw back the lid, knelt on the floor, and began overhauling the contents of the box. There were curious odds and ends—a set of razors with a strop, a pair of curling-tongs, a bouquet of withered flowers tied with a faded green ribbon, an old dark-blue vest, a shabby cut-a-way coat, and a pair of hob-nailed shoes. The Count looked at these things, took them one by one in his hand, whilst a sinister smile anon played across his features, as heat lightning in summer-time plays across the thunder-cloud.

He was holding the razor-strop in his hand, and even affectionately slapped it against his cheek, when he started again. This time there was no mistake; he distinctly heard a footstep in the outer hall. He put the letters into the chest, restored the things he had disturbed to their former position, hastily locked it, and arose. He heard the footsteps coming nearer.

“It’s devilish odd,” he said; “I can’t have time enough in this busy life to take even ten minutes to look back on the past; but I suppose reminiscence is a luxury which, were I to indulge in often, might prove very costly. I haven’t opened that chest for years, and it’s very strange, I remember the last time I opened it the calamity which followed. I’m getting superstitious in my old age—”

There was a rap at the door. “Come in,” he said, and his valet Sharpe entered the room.

“She’s here, sir,” he said abruptly.

“Who?” screamed the Count, for once betrayed out of his ordinary calm.

Not a muscle of Sharpe’s face quivered. “It’s—” he began.

“Naturally,” said the Baron. “Signora Foresti; I’ll come to her at once. I will dress myself. No; I’ll go as I am.”

Sharpe disappeared. The Count placed a hand

on his heart. "I'd utterly forgotten," he muttered. "Gad, how nervous I am; I need something to steady myself;" and he poured out a glass of brandy from a decanter in a richly-chased Bohemian liqueur-case which stood on his smoking-table. As he lifted the dainty crystal the touching strain of 'Ah che la morte' came tinkling from the recesses of the casket.

"*Natürlich*," he said, "there's only one death tune in the box, and of course that would turn up on this occasion." Then dashing some perfume over his face and hair he went into the library.

Ida Forrester had changed greatly since we last saw her in Chicago. Ruined by the fire, her parents could not survive the shock, and followed each other within a year to the last home they would ever occupy in the Garden City. Ida did not inherit the anticipated fortune from her great aunt. The latter, after tearing up many wills, living on the fat of the land, being treated like a queen, putting not only family relatives but friends to any amount of trouble, finally died—insolvent. Ida was left alone to get a living as best she could; and having a pretty voice, a pretty face, and shapely limbs, the stage suggested itself to her as the most enterprising field for a lucrative future. She had managed to go abroad; had "made" several unimportant theatres

in Italy. She had met the Count at Ems' renowned resort for singers and artists. He lost his heart, and after a vain siege of this formidable *citadel, found this fortress of American virtue as impregnable as the Rock of Gibraltar. Ida only yielded to the persuasion of a wedding-ring. The marriage was secret, as the Count explained that his position was such that his royal relatives would never forgive him were he to marry a professional singer. Ida, who saw a glowing future not only of theatrical but imperial laurels, readily consented; on condition, however, that until their marriage should be acknowledged, she might continue her singing. Although devoted to her, and unreasonably jealous, his affairs were at that time in such a position that it suited him in every way to accede to her desires. He had returned to New York; a year had passed, and his pretty wife was still warbling on the Continent. Ida, who had always been singing in grand opera, conceived a wild freak to return to her native country; but there being no Italian musical season at that time in New York, she being still stage-struck accepted a lucrative engagement to sing at the Casino. Whether or not Ida was very much in love with her husband remains to be seen. He certainly was more in love with her than ever, and as much enamoured of her as a man of his nature could be enamoured of

any one besides himself. Their long separation had but added to his passion, in singular proof of the old adage, “Absence quenches small flames, and re-kindles great ones.” She had been in America three months, and had often asked him when he would announce their marriage to the world. The Count could only reiterate the old reason—his family’s opposition, and their constantly-repeated wishes that he should make a brilliant match.

It was strange, but he had been so filled with the past and Adèle, that all thought of Ida had flown from his mind. He went to meet her with more trepidation than eagerness. The Count was not in the first flower of youth, and noticed with some alarm that little things affected him more deeply now than of old. He was still thinking of the supper party and his emotion.

“*C'est égal*,” he muttered, “it was an awful shock, and I feel shaky over it yet. Were I only mistaken! But, alas! a kind of cold feeling in the inside marrow of my bones tells me that I am not. I—”

He stopped abruptly, for the drawing-room door was open, and Signora Foresti sat before him.

“What a time you’ve kept me waiting!” she said. “I’ve invited myself to come to lunch with you. You don’t seem overpleased to see me! Am I in the way?”

“In the way!—as if my darling could ever be in the way!” said he, giving her an affectionate kiss, and slipping his arm round her slender waist. “But it isn’t luncheon time, surely? Have I kept you waiting?”

“Luncheon time! Why, it’s nearly one o’clock.”

“Impossible!” he said, lifting his hands in holy horror; “and the Chromo-Literary Society meets here this afternoon. Where can the morning have gone to?”

A shadow came over Ida’s face. “As if I knew where your time goes to! Surely I take up very little of it! I didn’t see you yesterday, and you didn’t come to the theatre last night. What’s this Chromo-Literary Society? May I come to it? And who were those people in the box with you the other night? The girl nearest the stage is very beautiful.”

“Is my pet jealous? She ought not to be. Stop! First I’ll tell Sharpe to get our luncheon, and not to let any one in while you’re here; in the meanwhile we’ll discuss the literary meeting. Do you really want to come to it? It will be very dull, you know!”

“Yes; I do.”

The Count reflected. “In most civilized countries artists nowadays are received everywhere; America draws the line at the stage. New York, in virtue of her pride of birth, and remote ancestry, is not only

more difficult than other cities, but is almost inaccessible." He explained this to Ida.

"Nonsense!" she said. "Am I not as good as the wife of any glue merchant? Besides, I was born a lady; my loss of fortune sent me on the stage, it is true, but my love for art is such that I would still sing if I had a million. Besides, am I not a Countess? Am I not your wife?"

"My dearest, silly little Ida, of course you are; but, alas! you are not yet my wife before the world. You are only Signora Foresti, the opera-singer, and must continue so until I can claim you proudly before every one. Will my dearest little Countess listen to her husband, not fret, and not make him unhappy, but listen patiently to what he has to say?" Then he slipped on one knee before her, kissed her hand, as Rizzio might have kissed Marie Stuart's.

Ida was mollified; calling her Countess had rarely failed in its softening effect. The Count jumped up gaily.

"It's a bit your own fault," he said; "you would continue singing."

"And am I never to go into the world—into your world, I mean?"

"Why, my dear, were you in London, or Paris, or St. Petersburg, you could go now, but in New York it is very different. They are very strict, very straight-

laced here, and there are hundreds of women in the City who have never seen an actress off the stage in their lives, and would no more receive one in their house than they would receive an untamed gorilla from the wilds of Africa. I can't reform society; it isn't my fault."

"You can't reform society! Well, I don't know anybody in New York who can if you can't. You know you head everything in the City, and there's not a paper published that does not chronicle your name and your doings; if you wanted to, Fritz, you could perfectly well introduce me to some balls or parties; if you don't I'll begin accepting theatrical supper-parties! I don't see why I shouldn't have some fun as well as you."

"That I will never permit!" he said hotly.

"I'm invited to one to-night, and will go to it—with my lady companion, of course."

The Count turned abruptly towards her. "Ah, yes, your lady companion"—he repeated her words slowly.

"She was at supper with me the other night at Del's. She's a most superior person."

He raised his eyebrows incredulously. "How does it happen I've never seen her before? I thought Miss —— what's-her-name was still with you?"

"That shows how much attention you pay to me!"

Miss St. Amand died of croup two weeks ago, and Fraulein—”

“ Ah !”

“ What’s the matter ? Yes, Fraulein Adèle Marx —What’s the matter ? You look pale ; another ball, I suppose, and dancing till five A.M.”

“ You’re unkind, dearest Ida. I’ve been really ill since the night I was at the theatre, and was in bed all day yesterday and all the evening. Haven’t you a word of sympathy for me ?” He hypocritically dropped his sea-green eyes.

“ Of course I have, you old dear ! I didn’t mean it ; forgive me, won’t you ? You were really ill ?—why didn’t you send for me to take care of you ?”

Sharpe announced the luncheon. The Count led the way, still talking. He was saying how strict New York was ; how beautifully she had sung the night he was at the theatre ; and how ill he had been the day before. “ I couldn’t send for you,” he added ; “ besides, it might have affected your voice.”

“ By the way,” said Ida abruptly, “ you’ve not told me who the beautiful girl in the box was—an heiress or great lady, I suppose ; you never have any others in your train ; you can’t propose to her, that’s one satisfaction.”

“ I wouldn’t marry her were I twenty times free. Still, you’re right ; she is a great lady. Her name is

Enilda Rozen ; she is a great heiress, and they call her in New York 'The Copper Queen.'

Ida turned very pale. "Enilda Rozen ! what do you mean ?"

"Do you know her ?" he asked eagerly.

"I knew one girl named Enilda Rozen. We went to school together in Chicago, but this can't be the same, for she was very poor, and her father only a miner."

"But it is ; indeed it's the same ; her luck changed for the better."

"As mine did for the worse—at least until I met you," she added somewhat less bitterly.

"On the contrary, at least luck befriends you now. You went to school with her. Girls generally have an inordinate affection for their school friends ; she'll remember you, of course, and—what a lucky thing that I mentioned her name ! She's the very person of all others who could introduce you into society ; and, by the way, something was said about knowing you."

"Ah !" said Ida sneeringly. "What did she say about me ?—nothing nice, I'll be bound."

"My dear child, you don't think I'd allow her to speak ill of you in my presence !—besides, she's a lady, and wouldn't speak ill of any one ; but—I don't understand,—were you not friends ?"

"Well, I may as well tell you the truth about it. We were not. She was poor. I couldn't associate with her then. Besides, I didn't like her. Of course, it's just my luck, but she was about the only girl in the school I didn't get on with. Naturally, if I had imagined she would ever have had such a position, I should have treated her better."

There was a moment's pause. "My dearest child, I fall from heaven; it's most awkward. I really don't see what you can do."

Another silence ensued, broken only by the clattering of the breakfast things. Ida was the first to speak.

"Can't you suggest anything?" she said humbly.

"I suppose I can." His voice was not encouraging.

"Well, you must think of something, for I'm determined to be presented in New York society."

The Count reflected. "There's only one way that I can see, and that is, come to the literary meeting to-day. I'll introduce you to Miss Rozen, and you'd better make a clean breast of it. Take the bull by the horns; speak of your past; say you hope she has forgotten your school chaff. I don't know—you're a woman, and ought to know best what to say. As you're determined upon this thing, why, trust to luck."

"Suppose she cuts me!"

"My dear child, that's impossible. I'll ask a pianist to come, I might even ask the Tenor. I'll present you specially to her, and say we enjoyed the performance so much the other night, I made a point of asking you to come and sing; that I thought we would vary our programme with some music."

"Me! I sing! You're crazy, Fritz; I'm not in voice. I did my usual exercises this morning, and I never sing in the afternoon."

He looked at her. "Oh, very well; do as you please."

"Now you're angry."

"My dear child, I'm not angry; but if you don't want to sing, there's no excuse for your coming."

She burst into tears. "Ah, now for a scene!" said he. It is strange how differently the tears of a woman he loves affect a man before and after marriage. Ida had once cried at Ems, and the Count had kissed away the salt-water drops, and drank them as a rose drinks the morning dew. Now, although as real and pearly as ever, they were suffered to trickle unheeded down her face; and being tears of rage, not sorrow, they spurted forth, instead of falling with tender grace. The Count rose hastily from the table, began to hum 'The Watch on the Rhine,' made himself a cigarette, and began to smoke. Ida suddenly stopped crying; she went to him, and put one arm tenderly round his neck. "You know I

don't want to make a scene," she said, vaguely kissing his perfumed hair; "only I am nervous and anxious, and you oughtn't to treat me badly. Fritz, I have a secret to tell you. I'm—"

He took his cigarette from his mouth. "Damn it!—surely not," he ejaculated.

"Yes," she replied; "I'm learning a new part." And she stared into the fire as if pondering some weighty affair.

The Count heaved a sigh of relief.

"And that means?"

"That means, money for clothes."

"Do you wear few or many?"

"Oh, you naughty boy!—many. This time I'm to be a queen; so of course I must have props and things, and jewels to match."

There was a sharp ring at the outer door. "My dear," he said, "you must go now, and we'll talk it over some other time; but will you come back and sing?"

"Will you give me everything I want?"

"Everything! Does that mean you're going to ruin me?"

"Nonsense! I'll do very well with five thousand dollars for my dresses; and that necklace at Tiffany's you promised me. And—well, I'll come back and sing." There was another loud peal at the bell.

"Perhaps some of the people who are coming," she said tremblingly. "What will they think if they see me?"

"Oh, nothing!" he said. "I'm a sort of high art protector, as you know; dozens of young women, artists, actresses, and professionals of all sorts, come to sing and to recite to me, to see if I can get them engagements or good press notices. One must try to do some good in the world, and happily my position is such that with little trouble I can do more than most others. But I'll see you out myself, that's the best way."

"Most others!—modest Fritz; you know you have more influence than any man in New York; and, by the bye, I heard our managers say they were going to get you to interest yourself in a great theatrical charity. They want Gilmore's band—why, that's one of the very things I came to see you about to-day; but naturally the most important comes last, like the postscript to a letter. They want me to sing—all of our company take part—but they want the Academy of Music, and you must get it from the directors—free, of course. Now I'll run away; I hear Sharpe opening the door."

"All right, I'll do my best; but give me a kiss before you go; mind, no flirting with tenors, and no theatrical supper-parties."

She embraced him heartily. "Of course not, old goosey," then they went quickly into the hall—a messenger boy stood at the door.

"You'd better run while you can," said the Count in French; then he politely bowed her into the street, and came back to the waiting lad.

"Are you Count de Marcie?" said the boy. "I was to deliver this only into his hands."

The Count nodded in the affirmative. As he took the letter a nameless thrill shot through him, but as he glanced at the handwriting his worst fears were realized.

"She has found me out quickly," he muttered. "Now it will be war to the knife."

"Sign this receipt, sir, please," said the boy.

The Count started, hastily scrawled his name on the yellow paper, gave the lad some silver, and sent him off. Then he fled to his room and sank into a chair.

"Her presence means ruin," he murmured. "I'm dazed, yet—I won't read it now, I'll read it after dinner. If it be good news it will keep, if bad, there is time enough to learn it."

CHAPTER XI.

AT four the guests began punctually to arrive. Professor Protoplasm was among the first, he being President of the society ; Mrs. Chromo was the Vice-President, the Count was treasurer, and Miss Chandos-Cressy was the Honorary Secretary. Flora and Enilda were sparkling lights, occupying the position of Assistant-Secretaries on special occasions. Florestan and Mr. Pastor had both become members, and the Chromo-Literary Society was as well known in Gotham as the "Sorosis," or the "New York Stock Exchange." This Society was formed on the general principle of promoting knowledge and research in every art, profession, and science. While it was very exclusive, there was little red tape ceremony in its constitution and bye-laws. Persons presented with one voucher could be made passive members for five dollars a year—active, for ten ; the latter, as their title explained, being permitted to take part in all speeches, discussions, and questions appertaining to

the welfare and proper promulgation of the Society. Mrs. Chromo being the founder, on state occasions her name was still printed in Latin, "Lucia Chromo fondatrix," and although too ardent duties compelled her to resign the Presidency in favour of Professor Protoplasm, she was still looked upon as chief member and dictator, and the organization was still known by her honoured name.

Not only was the Count's house a spacious one, but the ante-chamber was as large as an ordinary drawing-room, and the drawing-room was as vast as any ordinary dancing-hall. The peristyle or court was in the centre, and chambers opened out of it on all sides as in an ancient Pompeian dwelling. A frescoed loggia was supported by slender fluted columns, and in the centre was a fountain where nymphs and faun sported gracefully amidst water which tinkled more musically than the waters of Rome's far-famed Trevi. Very often preceding and during the intervals of the Society's meetings the honoured members were seen arm-in-arm walking up and down the peristyle, conversing like Cæsars of old, or lounging carelessly against the mosaics gleaming in a faint turquoise from the quadrangle's golden panels. The women's quaintly-cut and richly-flowing garments might easily suggest old time Aspasia; but as to the men, to quote one of the lady member's

words, "One could scarcely tell the difference between them and the waiters." Whether in swallow-tail, or in irreproachable cut-away, the modern New Yorker has everything of the Cæsar about him but his clothes.

Professor Protoplasm after prayers called the Society to order. There were the usual references to motions which had been proposed and set aside at the last meeting; there were the usual congratulatory letters from all parts of the world; there was a sonnet addressed to the Society by a reclaimed native of the Fiji Islands; an analysis and report from a chemical student in Berlin; and several bills to be discussed relative to the framing and glazing copies of the Society's regulations, which were to be presented with a letter of thanks to each member of the committee; whilst others were to be offered, at a reduced rate, to such members of the Society as should desire to possess themselves of so immortal and immemorial a memento.

Mrs. Chromo, strange to say, was late, and the Count took it upon himself to remark that having the honour to receive the Society for the first time this season, he had taken the liberty of offering an extra attraction to vary the proceedings. He was interrupted by loud cheers. Gracefully acknowledging them, he continued:

“I have invited the young American Prima Donna, Signora Foresti, who has consented to sing; Mr. William Russell, the eminent pianist; and Mr. Cherubini, the favourite tenor.” Each of these names was received with enthusiastic applause. “With your permission we will precede our day’s work by the performance of the celebrated duet from Wagner’s ‘Tristan and Isolde;’ and in the midst of deafening acclamations the young artists were led forward.

This number, which is moderately long for an operatic selection, was given in its entirety.

New York in days gone by might have murmured at an hour of unparalleled, continuous, dual yelling, but New York of to-day suffers as much from Wagner-mania as from Anglo-mania. Each phrase excited immeasurable plaudits. Art and even science would have been forgotten, were it not that this composition has much more distinct relation to the latter than to the former, and thus reminded all present that even music is more dependent for effect upon science than upon inspiration.

The artists had retired after their fifth recall, when Mrs. Chromo burst into the room. She rushed wildly to her accustomed place, and reeled or rather staggered into her seat. Several members started up with anxious gestures and inquiring looks. Professor Protoplasm turned pale, and Miss Chandos-

Cressy drained with one gulp the whole pitcher of iced water which had been placed for the refection and delectation of the honourable President.

There was one gasp. "What is it?" "What is it?" "What can have happened?" were echoed and re-echoed on all sides. Mrs. Chromo, pale, with troubled eyes and dishevelled hair, was fanning herself, and slowly recovering her composure. Flora, with ready tact and silent sympathy, presented a bottle of salts. Without saying a word, Lucy Chromo took them, sniffing violently. Half-rising, and steadying herself on the back of her chair, she addressed the meeting extempore :

"I speak to you in the name of every tradition that Americans have heretofore been wont to hold sacred. I call upon you, men and women of New York, not to flinch, but to face the damning blow, with the same courage that our glorious Northerners faced Bull's Run. I call upon you in the name of all you hold most dear, one and all to prepare yourselves with the buckler and shield of midnight oil. Words fail me; but know that I have received a mortal blow. I have just been told that Christopher Columbus did not discover America."

We have heard of the excitement when the trick of the Trojan steed was discovered; also of the disturbance among the ladies of the Court, when the

enterprising Elizabeth inadvertently interviewed some of the mantle-famed Raleigh's Virginia tobacco, and insisted upon her household following the Royal example; and in our own humble and no less historic times, of the throwing of the first bomb from the little Monitor. Any or all of these events have been supposed to produce adequate and varied stages of emotion; but each and all were poor displays compared to that which followed Mrs. Chromo's words. For some moments little was heard in the room beyond a storm of wailing voices, some shrieking, some half-sobbing, but all engaged in violent clamour, and heretofore unknown corporeal gesticulation.

Mrs. Chromo was surrounded by a crowd of excited, anxious friends, none daring to question, but all vainly trying to comfort her. To the right and left, people were gathered together in groups, with ardent faces and gleaming eyes, individually discussing the question.

At last the meeting was called to order by the Count, who, after having retired suddenly, and as suddenly returned from an inner room, took it upon himself to order an immediate debate on the important question. He was received with cheers, and loud cries of "Hear, hear." He said that he felt deeply his difficult position, and was assured that all present would agree with him that the shock which

their honourable sister, Mrs. Chromo, had received, was one which fell with equally telling force not alone upon a refined, delicate, and sensitive woman, whom every American was bound in honour to defend, cherish, and protect—”

Long and loud interruptions of “Yes, yes,” and vociferous cheers :

“And protect,” continued the Count, clearing his throat, and continuing with a very loud Ahem ! “But I say, men, women, and children of America, this blow falls with equal force upon you and me, upon our families and friends; upon”—and the Count’s voice trembled with slight emotion—“not alone those who come after us, but upon those revered beings who have gone before.”

A hush fell upon the vast assembly. The Count dropped his eyes to the floor, and mechanically toyed with a twenty-four carat gold chain which dangled from his waistcoat.

Adam Chromo looked at Florestan. “I bet a dollar he’s thinking of his late uncle,” he whispered. Then the noble gentleman’s voice was again heard :

“With all my will and wish to speak, far be it from me at such a time to take upon myself the responsibility of addressing you on this august occasion. I remember once, when a question of some importance was discussed in Vienna a few years ago,

I said to my friend Joe—I beg your pardon, His Majesty Francis Joseph—‘There are matters of greater importance in your Empire than whether a Hungarian may be represented in Parliament in Hungary, or whether he comes up to Vienna to have a voice in the Imperial Parliament there; for who cares what Hungarians do any way when you come down to it?’”

The murmur of approbation this time was threaded with a slight hum of disapproval. Hearing the latter, the Count coughed and continued: “But I see we are on dangerous ground, and I may say that this is a question of neither Austrians, Barbarians, nor Hungarians, but—Americans.” (Frantic cheers.) “Although not born in this happy land, timely expatriation from my own noble country has gained for me here the double right of naturalization and citizenship. I am proud to call myself an American—” (screams of “Bravo!” and thunders of applause)—“and my interest in her birth, history, progress, and well-being, is as deep as my interest in my own individual birth, history, progress, and well-being.”

At this Mrs. Chromo, who had gradually recovered from the effects of her emotion, rose hastily, and waving a delicate point-lace handkerchief, cried:

“Before we go any further, I propose three cheers for the most noble Count of Marcie and D’Orbach,

who, out of a pure love for the people and institutions of America, has waived all those hereditary rights, castles and lands belonging to his ancestors, and has set aside royal friends and more royal associates, to make himself a plain everyday citizen of our great and glorious Republic."

While she was yet standing, the whole assembly arose and united in a triple "Hip, hip, hurrah!" for the Count of Marcie and D'Orbach. The latter bowed repeatedly to right and left, whilst Mrs. Chromo sat down and had her well-gloved five and three-quarters vigorously shaken in congratulation by those in her immediate neighbourhood who could practically express their appreciation of this last able and felicitous motion. The Count still had the floor, and the hubbub having somewhat subsided, he addressed his concluding words to the assembly :

"Having, as an American, individually America's interest at heart, and although my wish may be as great, if not greater than any one's present, not only to establish but to maintain that interest, I would not for worlds that words of mine, however warm, should fall short, by one single intonation or degree of heat, of that convincing eloquence which should uphold anew not only America's present rights, but her inherited rights and traditions. Even knowing

and feeling as I do; longing, even bursting as I am to defend this great country, I realize that if ever in her life America needed an eloquent and able defender, she needs that defender now. Ladies and gentlemen, I sacrifice myself to the situation, and yield the parole to the only man on this or any other continent I deem worthy of it, to our most honoured President, Professor Protoplasm, M.A.S.L.C."

Professor Protoplasm arose amidst prolonged cheering. The room at this time had somewhat the appearance of the Senate at Versailles, when France's war debt to Germany was paid, and Gambetta hailed M. Thiers as the Saviour of his country. With a happy instinct the young pianist seated at the piano broke into an *impromptu* of "See the conquering hero comes," while the Professor, pale and much affected by the spontaneous outburst that had followed the mention of his name, stood nervously at the President's desk, anon gently wiping his forehead with a yellow silk handkerchief; anon rubbing his glasses, with that material foresight which always suggests grave if not strained mental pre-occupation. Men with elaborate study of a single glass have often been known to keep the entire House of Commons at bay for a quarter of an hour; saving nations perhaps, whilst they were only reflecting on a yesterday's indigestion, or the folly of to-day's

income tax; but Professor Protoplasm was not gaining time by paltry subterfuge, he was really and truly pondering the weighty question at stake; and as the last chords of "See the conquering, etc., " died away with their accompanying salvos of applause, the distinguished man opened his mouth and began to speak.

"Before proceeding any further," he said, "and while thanking you all most profoundly for the great honour you have bestowed upon me, and it is indeed rare, for '*Nemo propheta in patria*,' I wish, while gratefully accepting the grave responsibility thrown upon me, to disclaim any special qualification for this honour, beyond a little learning and the practice which the habitual discussion of serious questions has long imposed upon me. Our friend the Count has been far too modest; and although I benefit by his modesty, I must preface my remarks with an ardent although too unworthily expressed eulogy, not only on the talents, and the natural gifts, but on the wonderful and miraculous culture with which this gifted man has supplemented them. Everything is relative in America; we all work, because our tradition is work, and we cannot specially esteem men who do only what they have been brought up to do, and in fact who do only what they know how to do. They have no other idea than work. But

for a nobleman brought up with old world traditions and responsibilities the question becomes a very different one. Lord Macaulay has specially remarked that 'Industry and a taste for intellectual pleasures are peculiarly respectable in those who can afford to be idle, and have every temptation to be dissipated.' The Count can afford to be idle, and has every temptation to be dissipated."

With these words the Professor gave a side glance at the ladies and looked down. "But," he went on, "instead, he is the hardest-worked man in New York. His name, with that of my friend our hon. treasurer, Mr. Florestan, heads half the charitable and philosophic societies in the city. He has as great a power in the social as in the philanthropic world. His protection of artists in every profession and of every degree, has earned for him not only individual benedictions, but more than this, the proud title of New York's *Mecænas*. Not more valuable were those counsels given to the city of Athens, when presumptuous Phryne's offer was so subtly rejected, than are the counsels which the Count has so wisely and generously bestowed in his multiple positions in Gotham, standing as he does at the head of her multiple inhabitants."

The Professor paused an instant and studiously wiped his glasses; he then continued:

“That the Count could have handled this subject better than myself none of us can for a moment doubt, and I feel, as he did, his difficult position. I am also positively of opinion that the shock which our honoured sister, Mrs. Chromo, has received—Sister Chromo, a refined, delicate, and sensitive woman—not alone crushes the past and present, but the future. I feel that it is no longer a question of an Empire, but of a Great Republic; as my distinguished friend said, ‘It is not a question of Austrians, Barbarians, or Hungarians, but—of Americans.’”

The Professor stopped. Whilst the room re-echoed to prolonged cheering, he turned to take a drink of water, but one pathetic glance into the empty pitcher reduced to this condition by the recent very natural emotion of Miss Chandos-Cressy, caused him hastily to withdraw his hand, and without refreshment re-commence his defence of Columbia. In the mean while the word was sent hastily down the line, and a fresh supply of iced water was speedily commanded, whilst the speaker patiently resumed :

“There may be many people in this ignorant world—for, as I have always said, the world in general, alas! is very ignorant—I repeat, there may be many people to whom the question which we are just debating would have come home without the slightest

emotion ; but you or I, or any enlightened person, can well understand and appreciate Sister Lucy Chromo's shock on hearing that Columbus did not discover America. Professor Longfellow tells us that it is no matter who does a good thing, provided that a good thing is done. But I don't agree with him ; in this case it does matter a very great deal. I'm sure I represent the sentiments of every man, woman, and child, in this great country when I say that individually we all distinctly desire that Columbus himself and none other should have discovered America. I am sure no one will have the heart to ask me why, but without asking I think I can tell the why and wherefore, and that, too, without any very elaborate struggle. In the first place, contemporaneity killed and kills most people, but it did not kill Columbus. We all know what a brute Charlemagne was, and how he ill-treated his two wives ; and all remember how Napoleon trod upon poor Josephine ; and there are countless similar examples which I need not name, all of which, alas ! hold up great names to the light of particular reprobation ; but who can cast one blighting shadow upon the personal name or fame of Columbus ? I ask you who can do this ? Echo answers, 'No one'—'not one !' We have all heard of his boyish fancies and flighty tricks ; of his toying with the egg ; and even

of the royal dissension and squabbles occasioned by his precocity and prescience of mental capacity ; but if any one knew anything against Columbus he had the decency never to say it, and the discoverer was one of the few great men upon whom the super-human progress of a precocious civilization can cast no slur. Shall I tell you the truth ? I, too, had heard this doubt of Columbus hinted at years since ; but although devoted to the pursuit of historical and scientific research, still cherishing, as I do, a few illusions, I would have been ashamed to have pushed this matter any further, and I took very good care not to let it prey upon my mind. I, too, had heard of a Chinese priest, a millennium or two since, who lived for forty years away from his own country, and then returned and presented a few books of travel, maps, and things to China, and led this tea-pot Empire to believe that during his little trip he had discovered new continents. Experts, not satisfied with the noble Genoese and what they know, descant on this fanatic and what they don't know, and try to prove that whilst revelling in mystic Buddhist rites and antique religious orgies, he was engaged in the noble pastime of bringing new worlds to light. Snobbish New Englanders, not satisfied with a Puritan descent of four hundred years in a direct line, have raked up another story about Scandinavians having discovered

America in the year 900, and of most of these people with old Odin in person having settled—naturally—at Boston, Massachusetts, and thereabouts. Well, of course, I know that few Americans are content to date their ancestry back to 1492, and that the units belonging to the year 900 make a much more respectable figure on the escutcheon of any family coat-of-arms; but all these statements, memoranda, or other documents which a curious and invidious world has seized upon and ferretted out, are, alas! only suppositions, and not facts: for certain people have not the gift of building, but the art of tearing down.

“It is a very odd coincidence, but in traditions of all countries there rests the universal doubt as to their birth; and this same ignorance is noticeable as to people and to races. No one can tell exactly who was the first Frenchman, the first Italian, the first German, or the first Russian; but all the world knows or ought to know who was the first American; and I repeat, the birth of different countries, with the exception of our own, is scarcely more authentic. Who can fix on any one man and say he discovered Russia, or Africa, or Asia; but every one knows that Columbus discovered America, as we have positive and documentary evidence as to that fact. Most countries have a great many traditions to go on

with ; America has very few. She begins her career with the square-toed tradition of Columbus ; she follows it up with that of Pocohontas and Captain John Smith—the story of Heinrich Hudson, and Rip Van Winkle's sleep of twenty years—George Washington and the immortal cherry-tree ; and while I am upon that subject—destroy the tradition of Columbus, and where would America be ? Destroy the tradition of that cherry-tree, and where would Washington be ? Shall the blighting breath of research in one fell aspiration doom not alone a country, but two of that country's noblest names ? ”

Loud cries of “ No, no ; never,” rang over the house ; at the same time a pitcher of iced water was handed up, and the Professor, during the momentary enthusiasm, perennially excited by the dual mention of America and that cherry-tree, seized the opportunity to refresh himself with a prolonged drink, and then continued :

“ I say, were any of these traditions to be destroyed, the fabric of American civilization would shatter in its structure, as a house goes to pieces whose foundation stones have been removed. I am the first man in the world to urge research in every possible branch—historical, scientific, philosophical, and philanthropical ; but on this point, men and women of New York—I may say of America—take

my advice, leave the path which idiotic research strews with shattered idols as the autumn wind strews the autumnal path with leaves; continue on in the wide roadway of ancient tradition and customs; and as President of this society, I distinctly set my foot down against any further sifting or elucidating of this Columbus matter. If research were only a disease that could be cured by physic, or science an excrescence which when too prominent could be cut away by a surgeon's knife, then I say the world might still be saved. My friends, a few more words, and I have concluded. This world is a very good world; there haven't been as many mistakes made in its whole get-up as people imagine. Believe me, it is altogether a clever world, and the whole American scheme is all in all a good one. We are naturally a polite people; we do not gratuitously hurt the feelings of any brother nation; but you needn't tell me that the Old World, even financially speaking, would have been very clever to have left this great, this valuable country, so long undiscovered. Every century since Homer sang ballads in the streets has produced its Columbus: but what kind of Columbuses were they? And as to the Old World, why, my friends, the Old World, too, is no such fool as she looks compared with this leaping, surging civilization. I ask you, What does the Old World live on? Her

new-fangled ideas?—No; her traditions. Does she shatter her idols?—No. Will those idols shatter?—No. *Should* those idols shatter?—Distinctly, indubitably *No*. But we—we, a young race—what are we doing? With a mistaken idea of progress and truth, we spend our time shattering our idols.

“I repeat, the Old World may not be as quick as the New—perhaps not as clever—but it certainly is more artificial than ours; more dodgy, more out and out malicious. Catch England, Russia, Prussia, or Austria, letting the light of a too strong research upon their civilization. The day they do it they are doomed; people as well as time-honoured institutions—especially the first-named. But let us speak of England. Shall we, the sole speakers of her language, the unique inheritors of her race, the younger sons of the mother country, inherit the vices and none of the prejudices of our ancestors? Shall we be less crafty, less clever, less patriotic than she? Shall we uproot the few solid, indisputable, unimpeachable traditions we have, and denude our houses, homes, and country of the only things which add to their lustre and greatness? My friends, beware of indecent haste in research! Individuals may look up any family heritage, lands, titles, privilege, and estates, but if America wants to hold her head up amongst other nations, to wear the purple of a

corrupted but agreeable civilization, let her beware the demon progress. Let her limit her historical research as she does her Chinese immigration, and then the American Eagle will with time flap more immortal wings than Jupiter soaring perennially in space from the heights of ancient Hymettus. My last words are these:—The villain Americus Vespuccio has robbed the modest Genoese of the honour of lending his name to the land he discovered; let not ungrateful Americans—I should even call them Columbians—add to the dastardly combination of stripping from that inspired head those dearly-earned laurels so universally bestowed on the great, virtuous, and irreproachable Columbus.”

When the Professor finished there was not a dry eye in the house. Silent emotion burst its narrow confines, and the room re-echoed to long, enthusiastic cheering; the Professor’s hand was nearly shaken off. Not alone he, but every one was congratulated on the speech;—the President and Committee on such a Society—the Society on such a President and Committee. On a motion of Mrs. Chromo’s, the lyric stars furnished an interim of delightful music; and on a second motion of Mr. Florestan, the vexed question of Columbus was to come before the meeting that very day, and then be set at rest for ever, or until such time as the President and members

should by unanimous consent agree to again occupy themselves with it.

“Let us strike while the iron is hot,” said Mrs. Chromo, “and settle it now.” She spoke excitedly, and her enthusiasm was so infectious that Florestan’s motion was carried by storm on the spot; it was decided that while the name of Columbus would be held in as great reverence as heretofore, the question of whether or no he discovered America, should rest tabooed for ever in the society’s discussions.

The President rose and spoke a few more words; and without the length of red tape usually unwound on such occasions, the subject was dismissed, and the affair pigeon-holed—perhaps for eternity. After the discussion of a few minor matters, the meeting broke up into a delightful conversazione, which terminated in a banquet whose sumptuousness would have inflamed Lucullus’s heart with envy.

Before the company were seated the Count came graciously towards Enilda.

“Dear Miss Rozen,” he said, “permit me to present to you our young American Prima Donna, Signora Foresti.”

“Oh,” interrupted the Artist, looking sweetly at Enilda, “perhaps you will remember me better by my name of Ida Forrester.”

Enilda slightly flushed; the moment was a critical

one—but audacity usually triumphs. She cordially held out her hand.

“I do remember you,” she said; “we were at school together in Chicago. Let me thank you for your beautiful singing, and wish you success in your career.”

Even Ida could not refrain from bestowing a momentary glance upon the Count.

“Permit me,” said the latter, offering his arm to Enilda, and they seated themselves at the festive board. At that moment a band of music struck up.

“Dear me!” said Mrs. Chromo to Florestan, who sat on her right; “dear me, how well that music sounds! I must say that I like it at dinner; not that I can eat more, but I can eat better.”

CHAPTER XII.

CHARLOTTE CORDAY was not exactly happy in her new home. She had everything that heart could wish for, and yet something was lacking: that something was to be back again on the old farm at Laramie. There she was mistress and a very queen; here she was not only a servant, but, worst of all, a negro. She had never felt her blackness so much before as now, for she was the only coloured woman in the house, and although Enilda desired and commanded that she should be treated with every respect, still wishes and commands were alike disobeyed, and Charlotte was made to feel not alone her insidious complexion, but her isolated position.

Enilda had made Charlotte Corday a sort of housekeeper, but she remained so only about twelve hours. First one servant then another declared "they wouldn't be bossed by any darkie wench." The chef at the outset, being a Parisian, and like

most Frenchmen used to calling blacks Brazilians, did not at all object to Charlotte's position; but New York is democratic, not republican, and now in a fair way to becoming Hibernian. Most of the help is Irish, and who ever has known a descendant of Curran to mix with "naygurs"? Charlotte's unpopularity became patent, when, like the faithful servant she was, she not alone ruled the household, but tried to check waste in the kitchen, and bring before her mistress's eyes the style of creature the New York domestic was—her extravagancies, her airs, her graces, her lies, and general unvarnished impudence. One after another had given notice, left, and had been replaced, until finally Mr. Rozen took things in hand; relegated Charlotte Corday to an upper story—gave her not alone a separate table, but a separate hour for meals. The chef at first obligingly cooked these repasts with the regular bill of fare, but afterwards charged extra for them, as his wife pointed out to him that their son would soon need to be sent to Oxford, and one was not always chief cook to a Rozen or to a Khedive. Charlotte had scored once ahead of a first chamber-maid—chambermaid is the name given all housemaids in America, while the article known here as the fatal still-room-maid, in Gotham rejoices in the appellation of "second help." Charlotte Corday had

assisted at the engagement of these nymphs, and her blood boiled even now when she called to mind the catechism they had put her dear Miss Enilda through.

“Was there a bath-room with shower-bath and spray? Was there hot and cold water in the bath? Was the tub of silver or zinc? Were their friends free to dine every day? Was the house High Church or Low—Protestant or Catholic? Was their plate real, or only ‘a Roger’s combination’? Did ‘Miss’ dine at one or at seven? What families did Miss Rozen frequent in New York? What watering-place did she frequent in summer-time, &c. &c. &c. Why did the last chambermaid leave? Were the drains healthy? And how often in the month could the maids spend the evening at the opera?”

These and many other questions had been put to Enilda. In the Old World the mistress of the house usually goes through this domestic catechism, but in the New one the thing is not the same. There a servant must be on her dignity. In a land of freedom she considers herself not only as good as anybody else, but better than most people. Pamela’s destiny was poor compared to that which the American slavey marks out for herself. She comes to America with principles of equality, and for aim the White House. Her starting-point is Queenstown, her goal

if not the Senate, at least the House of Representatives at Washington.

Charlotte had assisted with rage at several intimate servant-hall scenes; the last chambermaid, Agnes, betrothed to one of the New York common council, and a rising young politician, had not exceeded the limits of her position, but she had been uncommonly impolite, and the negress could not brook personal attack.

One afternoon Enilda and her father were gone to the Park. Agnes, in a blue velvet dress copied after one of Enilda's, sat in the drawing-room playing the piano, and entertaining her lover, who was smoking a cigar with his heels on a little papier-maché table; one of the few articles of furniture, by the way, Charlotte doted upon. Coming into the room to look for one of her mistress's lace handkerchiefs left that morning on the "grand," she beheld fair Agnes mistress not alone of the situation, but the handkerchief, and in a moment of forgetfulness called her peremptorily to order.

Agnes responded, "Black wench, let up. You know if your skeleton were strung and set a-going the back-bone would be a series of links, put together like the rings in a monkey's tail. You are not a human being, but—"

Then Charlotte Corday, if she'd had a pocket-

knife, would have come very near to her famous namesake; the member of the common council also had an occasion to distinguish himself, which, like most of that honourable body, he ignored. It was the chance of his life, and he didn't take it. Instead of fleeing he remained and took the part of "Agnes of Killarney." A row ensued; the house was in an uproar, and when the sun set on Staten Island the politician was preparing for flight, and Agnes for a week of swelled forehead and black eyes; explained in foreign diplomacy as the result of a *coup d'air*.

After that there wasn't a nook or cranny which Charlotte didn't daily look into, or a thing in the house she didn't look after. She even penetrated to Mr. Rozen's private "den," and on one occasion went so far as to attempt putting his papers in order. This he soon vetoed however, and the poor negress found that she had little place in the realm where she was wont to be the ruler. Enilda was kinder than ever, but her time was constantly occupied. There were none of the long talks that made her so happy at Laramie; no consultations over dresses—that was with the new maid Melbourne; —only a little good-day now and then, a hasty tap on the shoulder, or a quick affectionate kiss on the withered dark cheek, followed by as quick a

“good-bye.” Charlotte Corday’s eyes lost their lustre, and her lips their once stereotyped grin; a wan smile sometimes played over her features, as sunlight occasionally falls across a hidden mountain cavern, but this lighting-up was almost as rare as the lighting up with Bengal lights of the Roman Coliseum. She never told her grief; only a settled melancholy cast its sombre veil over her dusky features,—she went about like a shadow, and shunned the neighbourhood of her fellows as a ticket-of-leave man shuns the neighbourhood of the Old Bailey.

The day following the Chromo-literary meeting, Charlotte, thinking over and dreaming of the past, conceived the idea of looking once again at her dead mistress’s portrait. She couldn’t find the one which Enilda always had in her room, and after a vain search up-stairs, decided to go down to Mr. Rozen’s private study, where she hoped she might come across it.

Enilda was spending the day with Flora, and as little Cyril was taking tea and dining with them, the negress knew she would not be disturbed for some time, and could enjoy the luxury of her reminiscences with all the solitude which such a reperusal of life’s pages required. She suited her actions to her thoughts, and went cautiously to Mr. Rozen’s apartment.

This latter was a series of small rooms on the first floor back of the drawing-room, and to the left of the conservatory. They were fitted up in the usual way with desks, lounges, book-cases, and sofas; but their quality and arrangement savoured more of a lady's boudoir than a man's "den." A dressing-room opened out of the principal chamber; there were no doors, only alcoves, and the arches were hung with the thickest of tapestry curtains. The walls even were padded, for Mr. Rozen was a light sleeper, and so nervous that he could not bear to hear a sound from the outer world. The silence was profound. A clock on the mantel-piece marked, but did not tell the time, for so far as mortal ears could affirm, it neither struck nor ticked.

Charlotte found the one door to the study open, an unusual occurrence, which she was too pensive to notice. She passed through, closing it mechanically, then went to Mr. Rozen's table and began looking about for the picture. She searched in vain, then examined book-shelf and bracket, still it did not turn up. It was getting dark, and the last gleams of a purple twilight sent a sinister reflection back of one curtain, evidently through a window looking on the side-street; otherwise the room was robed in shadow, and by some mysterious combination of material and spiritual sympathy, its sadness

lent itself to peculiar harmony with Charlotte Corday's spirit.

She sank deep in a chair and began again to think over the past, when the idea of seeing her dead mistress's face so possessed her, that she determined to find the picture if it were in the room. She jumped up and conceived the notion of searching for it in the compartments of the writing-desk ; and without reflecting on the strangeness of her proceedings, finding them unlocked, began one after the other to ransack them.

She had opened a fourth and fifth when she heard a man's voice in the outer hall. Her first thought was flight, but where to go ? Hastily closing the drawer she ran wildly about, and finally flung herself into the dressing-room, whose alcove curtains were an ample, if momentary, refuge. She had but just ensconced herself behind their friendly folds and lay crouching on the floor, when she heard a second voice, and the study-door precipitately open and close. The first speaker was her master, the second she could not at first recognize.

Charlotte was, strange to say, one of those servants, rare enough, perhaps extinct, now-a-days, who had never listened at doors, and whose curiosity was the least human thing in her composition ; for the above reasons she felt her unnatural and unusual

position all the more bitterly. But how to avoid it ? Had she come out boldly at first nothing would have been thought of it. There was nothing strange in being in her master's room, only that of late, reprimanded for interfering with his papers, she had been there so very seldom. There is a certain animal instinct in the negro, and skulking behind trees, chairs, doors, curtains, or any similar thing, is as natural to them, one and all, as for a baboon to run up a tree. Speak to a negro and he will look about to skulk, leave him alone and he will do it instinctively.

Charlotte Corday hoped that her master and his friend would only stop a moment, for it was not the former's usual hour of coming to his study: she hoped in vain; Mr. Rozen's words were the first to assure her of that.

“At least,” he said, “we can talk here undisturbed.”

His voice was not pleasant, and Charlotte thought it even had a pitiful sound.

“I am seeing too much of you,” he said, “of late. I'm not in the best of tempers. Why do you come to-day ?”

Then she heard the second respond :

“Are you crazy, or playing with fire ? Can't you see that Florestan—”

Charlotte Corday held her breath. Florestan,—ah, she knew all about him.

Rozen laughed a short hard laugh.

"I guess you're crazy. What can he do?"

"But you forget that he's helping Arundel."

"Ah! is that so? Mr. Vane had better look out."

This time the other laughed, and spoke a few words which made Charlotte Corday's breath come so fast she was afraid that they would hear it; the curtains seemed to stir with its force. "Oh," she thought,—"the shame of spying on my beloved master!"

Rozen spoke again.

"Why should you bother? No one on earth can hear us. These walls wouldn't betray the wildest ravings of a lunatic."

"Ah, yes; your nerves are so bad."

"D—d bad."

"You don't sleep well? How different from me, and yet—"

Then followed more talking. The words grew stronger, the voices louder. At last things were said which made poor Charlotte Corday wish herself in her grave rather than to have heard them. Once her heart beat so loudly that she felt she must be discovered. It gave a jump, and seemed to leap through the silk of her kerchief into her throat, she seemed to hear the silk tear.

“What’s that?” said Rozen. “I thought I heard some one sigh.”

He arose quickly and walked about. Charlotte could have screamed from very anguish.

“Your nerves are bad, my friend. My ears are as good as any one’s,—I heard nothing.”

Rozen replied strangely :

“I must assure myself there is no one here.” Then he went towards the dressing-room, hastily threw back one curtain, peered in, but seeing nothing seemed satisfied, and returned to his seat.

Charlotte was saved. Her master had lifted one curtain in such a manner that she was only more completely enveloped by the other. She began to breathe freely. At last she discovered that one edge of the tapestry was pulled away from the alcove, leaving a slender aperture through which she could not be seen, but could perfectly well see both the faces of her master and his visitor. The latter, however, was absolutely unknown to her. Mr. Rozen began talking, while she studied the stranger’s countenance. It was a pale, handsome face, innocent of beard, with a clear frank expression; an adorable look of candour in the eyes appealed very strongly to Charlotte, who, as she looked at him, kept repeating to herself, “That is a man I could never forget. I’d know him, golly, I would, I’d recognize that ere

phisamahogany if I didn't strike it for a thousand years to come." Once he dropped his burning eyes suddenly, and lifted them quite as suddenly in her direction. A cold chill ran over her, and made the roots of her hair prickle into her head with very terror; it seemed as if he must have seen her. Now-a-days it was not a question of flogging, of going without her hoe-cake, or being shut up on bread-and-water; she was no longer a slave; she was free, but she knew her master and feared his quick temper and stern nature; what would he do to her were he to find her, of all others, hidden and playing the spy on him in his own private apartment?

Mr. Rozen spoke again, got up, lit a cigar, and walked excitedly about the room. If Charlotte's soul had sickened at the thought of her own equivocal position, it grew still more faint on listening to her master's words, for he poured them forth with such volley and rage that it seemed as if the very windows rattled at the sound of his voice. What was she hearing? Great God! Had it come to this? Her very breath seemed to stop from emotion, and yet the man to whom her master had addressed these words alone sat calm and evidently unmoved. At last he spoke.

"Let me interrupt you," he said; "and—give me a cigar. What's the use of going over that

old ground? Were you a child, or your own master?"

Rozen made no reply.

"The thing is not what is past," he continued, with calm deliberation; "but two things to be considered are—"

"To-day and to-morrow," interrupted Rozen.

"Precisely," continued his visitor, puffing at his cigar with eminent satisfaction. "You worry, fuss, and fret, but you don't suggest any remedy. What am I to do about it?—or rather what is Vane to do about it?"

"Drop that name here," said Rozen, angrily; "only tell me, what is it you want now, and let us get to the end of this business as soon as possible."

His visitor smiled. "A cheque for fifty thousand to-day," he said; "the last transaction to be put absolutely and wholly in my name, and—"

"You're modest," said Rozen, sarcastically. "Is that all?"

"No, that's not all; a man must be put out of the way."

"Ah!" Rozen gasped. "What do you mean?" he said in a husky voice; "not—not Arundel surely?"

"No; not Arundel."

Rozen stopped abruptly, and knocked the ashes from his cigar.

“I don’t understand you,” he said.

“No? Well, suppose I should say Mr. Florestan.”

Rozen started, and his face grew as white as his wristband.

“You are a fiend incarnate,” he cried. “Do you think all the world as bad as yourself? Oh that I should have fallen so low!” Then he raised his voice, and began again in a vehement strain:

“Why do I ever look at you again? A murderer, villain, and a scoundrel. Why don’t I order you from my doors this very minute? An end must come some time, why—why not that end now?” He threw away his cigar, and put his hand to his breast-pocket as he spoke.

Charlotte could scarcely refrain from screaming aloud.

“Why,” said the other, excitedly rising and laying a heavy hand on his arm—“why, h-m! because you’re not a fool, Mr. Rozen, any more than I am. You are playing a great game; comparatively all in your own hands; you needn’t fling hard words at me because you’re evidently suffering from indigestion.”

“An indigestion of Pacific Mail in particular,” said Rozen shortly; “and—life in general.”

“Well,” continued his visitor, “you persist in looking upon me as your enemy, when I’m your

friend. Come now, let's talk business; I've a clearer head than you have, Rozen, although I mayn't have as clear a record, and I say, once for all, will you get rid of the man Florestan?"

"No."

"Will you make out the last transaction in my name?"

"No."

"My friend, you're a foolish man. Your interest may be mine, but up to a certain point, and when you come down to it, it's a d—d sight more your own than it can be anybody else's. Once I get—"

"Once you get all the money you can out of me, our pact is ended."

"Perhaps."

"What do you mean? Let me tell you there are no perhaps's that count. You asked just now for money—fifty thousand dollars;—here take them," he seized his cheque-book rudely; "and there still is to your credit—"

"There is still to my credit—more than you think, Mr. Rozen; you've had your say, now I'm going to have mine."

Then followed words, if possible, hotter and more violent than those which had so stirred Charlotte at first. She still was crouched on the floor, her limbs so stiffened by their stereotyped position, that

she seemed paralyzed, and doubted her ability to move, even were she to make the trial. Her burning eyes were still fastened on the face of the strange man who was speaking so strangely to her master. His words grew hotter and hotter, whilst Rozen retaliated with equal heat and invective; finally, the latter started up with a great cry, and stretching out his hands said :

“No; once for all, no; take your cheque and leave me. I don’t doubt the truth of all you say, nor the advisability of what you suggest. I hate him like poison, but I love her and—”

“Well, at least send her away, and leave the rest to me, since you’re so chicken-hearted.”

Rozen raised his head, and a gleam of relief broke over his face. “I can do that,” he said eagerly. “She said she wanted to go to London this spring; now if what you say is going to happen is true, the sooner the better.”

“Ah! that sounds more like it. Now I must leave you; had we better go out together, by the way—”

“No,” said Rozen sullenly. “Let yourself out as you came in, by the street-door; I shall go to my window and watch for you. When I see you on the opposite corner, then I shall leave the room.”

Mr. Rozen’s visitor took up his hat, his gloves, his

cheque, and threw away his cigar. "When shall I see you again?" he said, preparing to go.

"Well, I suppose you'll send one of your usual messengers, and the torn visiting-card seems to have worked very well so far. Good-bye, and reflect on what I've told you."

Without a word Rozen got up and went to the window, and his visitor departed so silently that he seemed to fade from before Charlotte Corday's very eyes. The room was in deep obscurity, yet she could see her master standing at the window. He withdrew the curtains, and for some moments looked silently into the street, but he dropped them suddenly, and came towards the door of his dressing-room; then he stopped again, and went towards his table.

"No," he muttered; "I'll lock up the things and leave the cursed place; every time he comes here he seems to taint it with new infamy. Until I met him I was an honest man." With that he closed the desk, and after a hurried glance around, left the apartment.

Once sure that he was well away, Charlotte Corday thought of leaving her hiding-place. A cry escaped her as she moved, and yet another, for her poor old limbs were aching in every joint. She felt faint and giddy, her head swam, and as she walked, the room seemed to reel about her. What she had seen and

heard, although so recent, was like visions of a nightmare. She let herself out this time without even thinking she might meet Mr. Rozen face to face in the next chamber, and with difficulty made her way towards her own apartments; however, her strength gradually failed her, and as she reached Enilda's door, with a sudden inspiration of coming evil she hastily turned the knob and entered.

Enilda was seated at her dressing-table, but she started up quickly and went towards her. "Charlotte," she cried; "what on earth is the matter? Are you ill?"

"I 'specs I am, honey child," she cried; "I guess I'm going to Kingdom come, sure"—and she fell headlong on the floor at her young mistress's feet.

CHAPTER XIII.

THREE weeks after Mr. Rozen's reception of his strange visitor, a great ocean steamer was just putting into Liverpool. Enilda, Flora, and Charlotte Corday were amongst the passengers; there were besides the usual crowd of human beings, representatives from most civilized and many uncivilized races. English and American however predominated, and there was an Anglo-Saxon hum which would not have discredited Broadway in May, or Rotten Row on a June morning. The deck was a constantly going and coming throng, opera-glassed and carpet-bagged. American women—I beg their pardon, ladies—had donned smart frocks in silk or cloth, for the final disembarkment, whilst the men sported tall hats and new frock-coats, handkerchiefs with conspicuous initials, and gloves whose purity would not have been amiss at a Trinity Church wedding. English women and men, wearing their customary

daily travelling dress, looked askance at their companions, so suddenly blossomed out into birds of exceptional feather, and with wondering eye took in the new and elaborate articles of wearing apparel thus suddenly sprung upon them by their cousins and Trans-Atlantic neighbours. There is an old Italian proverb, probably of Latin origin, before that Greek, and before that—pre-historic, which says: “Dimmi con chi tu vai, e ti dirò chi sei.” The American translates thus: “Show me the clothes you wear, and I will tell you who you are.” Landing in England for a first, second, or even one hundredth time, he has no intention of appearing at a disadvantage in so small a matter as the above-named.

Enilda, as American in this as she was in appearance, smartly-dressed, stood in the companion-way, talking with an English lady whose acquaintance she had made but two days previously; for the Trans-Atlantic steamer is a world in which every day of its trip from Liverpool to New York, or New York to Liverpool, new denizens constantly appear, as children put forth in a metropolis's poor quarter, or blossoms come cut on the white hawthorn; no one is surprised at these apparitions, when cabins give up their sick, and the deck promenade daily offers new physical attractions.

Enilda had spoken with the above-mentioned lady

several times. Twice their steamer-chairs had been side by side, and once they had walked together up and down the hurricane-deck ; but the acquaintance had gone no farther, neither knowing the other's name ; at least Enilda, up to the present, had ignored that of her companion, and if her companion knew hers, she had betrayed that knowledge by no possible sign. From the first there seemed to exist a strange sympathy between them, and as the moment of separation arrived, Enilda expressed the wish that they might meet again.

"I am going to spend the season in London," she said. "May I give you my card ? It would give me the greatest pleasure to see you in the 'gathering place of souls.'" Saying which she tendered a little card, which the lady without looking at slipped into her pocket.

"I too," she replied cordially, "would be most happy to meet you again. I have been to Canada on a visit to a cousin ; my health was so bad it was thought a sea voyage would benefit me."

"I do hope you are better."

"Oh yes, I am another woman. I had a nasty fall from my horse about a year ago, and feared at one time that I should be an incurable."

Enilda murmured some words of polite sympathy.

“ My husband is coming aboard to fetch me,” the lady continued. “ I must present him to you, and you mustn’t fail to look us up in Town. Don’t forget my name,” and she smiled pleasantly—“ Lady Mildred Claremont, Allison House, Grosvenor Square.”

Lady Mildred Claremont. John Claremont’s wife ! Enilda felt her heart stop beating ; and he—perhaps at that very moment—was near her, standing on the same deck with her ;—he—he of all men, and the woman he had preferred to her was now her friend. She herself had sought the acquaintance ; and at any moment Lady Mildred might present her husband—the man who had so nearly wrecked her life. Fate was too cruel. She had feared perhaps they might meet, but had never dared to think how—of the where, nor when ? And now—now it had come about at a time when she least expected it, and flight was impossible.

“ Is the world then so small ? ” she thought. “ And I ! am I so poor, so weak a creature as still to care for a man who treated me so basely ? ”

She had little time for reflection. Lady Mildred spoke again.

“ You look so very pale,” she said ; “ suppose we sit down. Those revenue-officers are such a bore ! I expect Mr. Claremont every moment—and, by the

way, if he can be of any service—men are useful sometimes about luggage, etc.”

“Oh, thanks!” said Enilda faintly. “I have my courier and maids, so that I shall get on very well. Pray don’t think of troubling yourself.”

“I must know to whom I am speaking, however,” said Lady Mildred politely, and she took Enilda’s card from her pocket. At that instant a hand touched her shoulder.

“Mildred!” said a deep, sweet voice. Enilda was forgotten.

“Oh John!” she burst out. “Here you are, like a dear to come so far; how do you find me looking?”

He kissed her lightly.

“As fit as possible,” he replied gaily. “Are your traps all right—boxes and so on? We are just going ashore.”

“You don’t ask me anything about my health,” she said reproachfully, “nor my trip. I have actually been sea-sick, and didn’t stir out of my cabin for days.”

“How can I ask about your health when I see you looking so jolly well?”

She laughed. “Well, I was dull enough any way, not knowing a soul aboard. I didn’t come with Aunt Chandos-Cressy after all—and oh! but I must

present you to a young lady who has promised to come and see us in Town."

She turned brusquely to Enilda, who had been too staggered by the succession of fatalities to even think of running away.

"It is evidently to be—it must come some time," she murmured. "Why not now as well as any other?"

Lady Mildred's voice was heard. She held the card in her hand, whilst her husband, with an extremely bored look, was standing at her side.

"Miss Rozen,"—began Lady Mildred.

John Claremont started violently, and an ashen hue crept over his bronze cheek. He stood for an instant without speaking. Dared he address her? Suddenly a wave of old time feeling swept over him. In spite of himself he went forward eagerly. One glance into Enilda's face decided him.

"Surely I cannot be mistaken," he said. "Mildred, do you know to whom you are presenting me? None other than the good Samaritan who saved my life in America, Miss Enilda Rozen, in whose father's house I was received and cared for after my accident. I have never forgotten the debt I owe her."

The debt! Enilda's heart cried shame. If he were equal to the occasion she surely ought to be.

She stretched forth a hand whose trembling at best but he alone could notice.

“Don’t speak of it,” she said lightly.

“The world is indeed small. Whoever would have dreamed of meeting you in this fashion ?”

Lady Mildred was full of enthusiasm: for an Englishwoman her thanks were really demonstrative. “I have often thought about you,” she said, “and questioned my husband a dozen times about America and his American friends, but he was as dumb as if he had passed his time with savages on the plains, and had not known a civilized person. But, upon my word, if the truth were known, with the exception of his illness I suppose he spent his time at balls and parties, and flirted outrageously with every pretty girl he saw. Tell me, didn’t he? You ought to know.”

John Claremont’s face darkened, and he looked seawards.

“Shall I tell you the truth, Lady Mildred? It ought to make you happy. I believe that’s just what he did; flirted outrageously, and—you know the more a man flirts the less serious it becomes; at least that’s what we think in America.”

“Ah!” said her ladyship, “you seem to know all about it. Confess the truth, John, did you flirt with Miss Rozen? Oh, never mind,” and she looked at

Enilda with an affectionate little glance, “it is one case for which you are pardoned beforehand.”

“My dear Mildred,” said Claremont harshly, “I don’t want to hurry you, but hadn’t we better be going?—every one is leaving the steamer. I beg your pardon, Miss Rozen, can I be of any service?”

“Oh, thanks, no,” said Enilda very quickly, “I have my servants with me, and my old nurse.”

“Charlotte Corday?” he said eagerly.

Involuntarily his voice dropped as he pronounced her name, for memory with invisible wings flew back to a year ago; to a rose-garden ripe with bloom and beauty; to a girl looking into his eyes, and plighting her troth; to the voice of an aged negress, murmuring a benediction, accompanied by the wind which stirred the trees’ young leaves, and the purling sound of a merry brooklet which ran on, ran ever, at the foot of a garden-wall. Enilda’s voice interrupted:

“Yes, dear Charlotte Corday”—then stopped abruptly. She was going to say, “She will be glad to see you again,” when she checked herself, for she well knew the contrary. “By the way, your arm?” she added; “is it quite well?” Lady Mildred interrupted, tapping his coat-sleeve lightly. “Poor old arm,” she said; “it isn’t much good, is it, John? No more shooting; no more fishing; the best he can do is to carry a stick or an umbrella, and write

an occasional scrawl to his wife whilst she is away."

"Although now she has come back she won't need it," said Enilda calmly. She remembered one letter John Claremont had written; evidently his arm was equal to that; whilst he, looking in her face, wished it had been paralyzed before it had ever penned those lines—and yet, the least he could do was to tell her the truth. A scraping sound was heard.

"Ah, fairly in at last," said Enilda quickly. What a relief that grating anchor was! "With a big steamer like this we are awfully lucky to catch the tide. The last time I crossed the herring-pond, as we call it, we were left away out; it was pouring with rain, and there was the most dreadful confusion and excitement. A mail-bag was lost overboard, and we went ashore in such a filthy tug, that I was as sea-sick, well—as I was when crossing the Channel to go to Paris."

"Ah!" thought John Claremont, "then she has been abroad; has been to Paris."

"My dear Enilda, what on earth has become of you?" cried Flora, breaking through the companion-way, and coming towards them. "Charlotte Corday's below crying her eyes out. And Arnold is civilly enough trying to console her. Oh, I beg your pardon, I hope I'm not interrupting. Isn't this too

perfectly elegant for anything? It's just like New York, only different. I can't understand a word the people say rushing about here; however, I suppose this is the pure undefiled English of our ancestors."

Lady Mildred smiled pleasantly. "Do, Miss Rozen, make me acquainted with your friend."

Flora bowed with becoming grace, shook Lady Mildred's hand warmly, and gave Claremont's a most decided grip. "It's very heathenish of you," she said; "I believe you've utterly forgotten me! Don't you remember we met at Mrs. Chromo's? By the way, she's coming over immediately with Miss Chandos-Cressy—"

"Miss Chandos-Cressy—do you know her?" interrupted Lady Mildred; "why, she is an aunt of mine, that curiously enough I have never seen; we were to have met in America, in Canada."

"You don't say," said Flora. "Well, I never; this is the oddest world for running up against people. Do I know her? Well, I should just shiver! Does a child know its mother?—dear old C.-C.!"

A wondering expression stole over Lady Mildred's face. "Why she was my—ahem!—she was an old friend of ours in Chicago,"—Flora had very nearly said, "my old schoolmistress,"—"and some time ago we all heard she came into a fortune; and that she—" Flora was getting into deep water—"and

we were all tickled to death—not that she was poor before, you know, but—" Flora looked desperately around; would no one help her out?

"Oh dear me, Miss Grayson," said Lady Mildred with a musical little laugh, "it isn't any disgrace to be poor in England. I've heaps of relations, cousins, and so forth, who haven't a halfpenny."

"Is it possible?" said Flora. "Well, it's a disgrace in America, in New York, to be poor. People would forgive it in you because you have a title;—oh I beg your pardon, Enilda, I must run down-stairs; I've left my last new diamond ring beside the wash-basin. I'm fairly fagged to death. Do you realize that we've been prowling around in sight of land these last four hours, getting in every minute and yet never striking land?"

"I think we'd better have a glass of sherry before we go ashore," said Claremont.

"Oh, a good idea," said Lady Mildred. "By the way, Miss Grayson, you must come and see me in Town; and do tell me something more about my aunt; is she nice?"

Whilst her ladyship was speaking they wended their way to the now almost deserted saloon. Half-a-dozen stewards were coming and going; knots of men and women were talking in corners; hand-bags, shawl-straps, books, and parcels of various

descriptions encumbered the long dining-tables. The chief steward was making notes and memoranda; ship acquaintances were exchanging cards, and the half-emptied bottles of wine in their respective racks, with the numbers of the cabins still hanging round their necks, wore the air of general abandonment usual to the situation. Enilda excused herself from taking any refreshment, and acting on a sudden impulse was about to say good-bye to Lady Mildred and her husband. Flora had already forgotten her ring, and was clamouring for sherry.

“Nonsense,” said Lady Mildred; “I can’t hear of saying good-bye now. We’ll all go ashore together; at least John must look after your luggage and see you into a carriage. Are you going to stop in Liverpool, or are you going straight on to London?”

“There is no train to Town till 7.30,” interrupted John Claremont, “that, or the midnight express.”

“We’re going to an hotel,” said Flora quickly; “the north-western I believe they call it—pity we can’t go straight on to London. I suppose there’s nothing to be seen in Liverpool? Now if it were a one house town in America, they’d at least have a new graveyard to spring on you.”

“My dear Flora!” interrupted Enilda chidingly.

“Oh, I forgot, I mustn’t be American now, as Mr. Pastor says; by the way, Mr. Claremont, he’s a cousin

of yours, isn't he? He's too lovely;—well, let me inform you on the strict Q.T.," she said, lowering her voice, "that he and I have just gone up together; he's my latest mash. Enilda, you needn't look horrified, as this is probably the last chance I'll have of speaking my mother tongue for some time. I'm going to improve the shining hour; the fact is he and I have been waltzing and monkeying around New York together till you can't rest. He's coming over,—follows me in the next steamer at my special invitation."

Claremont smiled, and Lady Mildred burst into screams of laughter.

"My dear," she said to her husband, "what does she mean? Isn't it too delightful? Is this the American language I have heard so much about? How odd it is," she added reflectively, "that English people most always speak alike, so do Russians, French, and Italians, and so on; at least the general intonation is the same; but I've known some Americans, and I've noticed if a dozen people are together in a room, each of the dozen will speak differently—different phrases, different expressions;—in fact, each one has his own individual language. Now, for instance, take Miss Grayson and Miss Rozen."

"Oh, Enilda ain't a pure American," said Flora,

with marked disgust. "Even in America she's supposed to give herself tremendous airs. Enilda, you needn't be looking at me in that tone of voice, for you know you do; but as long as you're to be my chaperone, I suppose it's just as well there should be one serious person in the party. Oh! I forgot to tell you about your aunt, Lady Mildred; she's awfully nice; and do you know what she looks like?"

"I confess I haven't an idea."

"Well, I don't want to hurt your feelings, 'cause—because, now I love her to death; but she looks exactly like the little old woman who lived in a shoe, or—well, like a fairy godmother going to a Cinderella's ball in a pantomime."

Lady Mildred flushed slightly. "What a very singular description!" she said with a chilly voice. "But had we not better be going?" she got up.

"I should think so!" said Enilda. "I must run off to poor Charlotte, or else she'll have a fit."

It suddenly struck her ladyship as odd that two young women, well-born and well-bred, should be coming to a great city like London without a chaperone. She was not curious, she found Miss Rozen charming, and being in complete ignorance of one page in her husband's past, had stifled even the momentary jealousy which came over her on

seeing her beautiful face, and realizing that Claremont had passed so many days under her father's roof—how many days, happily for her peace of mind, she had never known. She determined to question her husband again as soon as they were ashore. Something, however, was wrong, for he had spoken of this girl as a poor miner's daughter; still that was nothing—American fortunes she knew were made as they are lost, in twenty-four hours. It was but natural that the poor miner of yesterday should be the millionaire of to-day. This girl was evidently rich now. Lady Mildred found her manners as beautiful as her face; and in virtue of the kindness her husband had received at a moment when he most needed it, determined to do all in her power to repay that debt of gratitude. She did not see her way clear just then, but she determined to make herself so agreeable to the girl, that she could scarcely forbear speaking of herself and where she intended to stop in London. At that very moment Enilda appeared.

"I think I ought to tell you, Lady Mildred," she said calmly, "that Flora and I are almost alone for the present, although we shall only be so for a few days. Papa thought he was coming with me, and at the last moment had to let me start without him; isn't it annoying? But we girls came on just the

same, and next week a New York friend arrives, Mrs. Chromo, whom I think Mr. Claremont will remember." He bowed heartily in the affirmative. "Papa has taken a large house, and we are all to live together. Everything is arranged, it is ready, and waiting for us now."

"But, good heavens!" said Lady Mildred, "you two can't be going to live in a large house alone?"

"Really," said Enilda smiling, "and why not? I remember—" She checked herself suddenly; she had very nearly said, "I lived alone for months at a time in a small one at Laramie, and was alone in the house with him for six weeks."

"You can't go to an hotel," said Lady Mildred, reflectively; "so, I suppose, there is nothing for it but you must go to your own place."

"Oh! we'll have a lovely time," interrupted Flora. "Charlotte Corday is a good enough chaperone for anybody; besides, I have a lady companion with me who was with mamma even before I was born. We'd utterly forgotten her, hadn't we, Enilda? Ma wouldn't come to Europe for a farm; she knew she'd die of sickness and have to be thrown overboard, so I just chipped off on my own hook. Ma can trust me anywhere. Besides, Enilda and I are like cats, we always fall on our feet. London isn't so dreadful,

I guess, when you come down to it; it's not much bigger than New York, is it?"

Flora was irrepressible. Even Lady Mildred laughed as she said, "I have scarcely seen New York, but I think you'll find London big enough."

The chief steward came towards them; his errand was plain enough. "Ah, so it's really good-bye to the ship, and good-bye to you, Allan," she said pleasantly; "and thanks for adding so much to my comfort." She nodded graciously as she went up the companion-way for the last time.

There was the usual bustle the last moment before going ashore; hand luggage to be looked after, and the famous diamond ring to be recovered, which, in the heat of conversation, Flora had again forgotten. Finally, everything was in order, and they were really landed. A carriage was waiting on the wharf for Lady Mildred, and one for Enilda thoughtfully telegraphed for by her father, through his London agent, who at that moment was about boarding the ship to meet her. Enilda greeted him coldly, and replied with infinite civility to his inquiries after her father's health and her own passage.

"Dear me," said Lady Mildred cheerfully, "you have enough people to look after you, Miss Rozen! I think we had better dine, and go up to Town

together. My husband and I can look after you, and it will be much better than your going up by yourselves."

Lady Mildred was not ordinarily so gracious; she was still striving to win her husband's love, and could not think of a better way than by being unusually civil to those for whom he had often professed the sincerest regard. Enilda courteously accepted the offer to go on to London together, but positively declined the dinner, pleading a headache and excessive fatigue; the day had been so long and so—and so tiring.

"No wonder," said Lady Mildred, "we've been on the qui vive for hours, and I begin to feel the reaction myself. Good-bye till we meet at the station later on. John, just put me in the carriage, then I'll wait for you while you look after Miss Rozen a bit. There's such a noise and such a bustle on this quay, I am feeling quite knocked up." John Claremont lifted his hat, and walked away with his wife.

Ten hours later they were in London. "It is too funny," said Lady Mildred as they separated at Euston; "it's too odd to think of you two girls going alone to—but where did you say your house was?"

"Park Lane," replied Enilda quickly, and she added the number.

"I shall look you up to-morrow," said her lady-

ship, "if I feel equal to it; if I don't, I'll send John; you can give him a dish of tea, and talk over old times. Oh! he hasn't forgotten how to flirt," she added laughingly; "and I give him full liberty with you; he'll have every club man in London deadly jealous before a week rolls over his head. Good night; you must not be dull; we'll go to the play together, and see about heaps of things all in good time. And you," she said, turning pleasantly to Flora; "you seem as fresh as a daisy. I never saw such spirits. What do you propose doing now? —not sight-seeing I hope?"

"Well, I should remark," said Flora laughing, "my present intention, as Lady Mary Wortley would have said, is to interview some 'chicken and champagne' at the shortest order possible. I may look a daisy, but I begin to feel like a trampled one; and —as you said yourself in Liverpool—a trifle knocked up."

She added this last with a very wry face. John Claremont handed Enilda into the carriage. He longed for one glance into her eyes. Would she look at him? Since their meeting on the steamer she had never once gazed full in his face, but had persistently and intentionally averted her eyes every time his own had sought hers. At that instant the old love that he had been trying so hard to master

rushed over him in one headlong tide. And she—had she forgotten him? He knew he had treated her basely; he remembered the power he once held over her, and with all a man's inconsistency and impatience, he determined to know now, at once, if that power were gone for ever. At that moment he would have shrunk before no baseness could he but have called her back to him; "at least," he thought to himself, "she shall look at me, if only for a second," and he grasped her hand at parting with such a grasp that she almost recoiled at the touch, but it had the desired effect.

She raised her eyes suddenly, and looked with a burning passionate glance into his own. In that look he was answered.

"Good night," he said, suddenly dropping her hand. "Good night again, Miss Grayson," and the carriage-door closed on his retreating form.

CHAPTER XIV.

FLORESTAN had kept his word, having befriended Arundel in every possible way, but he had done it on condition that his name should not appear in connection with the affair, at least any more than was possible. After that first meeting they had had a great many, Arundel each time appearing with various letters and statements, none of which, however, were sufficient in Florestan's eyes to legally condemn Vane. That he was morally guilty he felt certain, and with regard to Mr. Rozen, having, as he had, the highest respect for him, he hoped with time that not only would he see his partner in his true light, but that before long that partnership would be dissolved. He had even contemplated conferring with Rozen on the subject, but it was no light matter without legal proofs, only upon moral convictions, to brand a man in Mr. Vane's position with so startling an infamy as that with which Arundel

branded him ; for were even a tithe of Arundel's story true, not only was Mr. Vane the veriest wretch unhung, but surely, in whatever way the law might regard it, morally he had forfeited for ever the right to have his hand shaken by an honest man. But the proofs—ah ! there was the rub. Instead of gaining, Arundel seemed almost losing ground. He had even made one bold stroke, and had entered a suit for recovery of certain rights and properties from Mr. Vane, by virtue of an agreement entered into some five years previously for the mutual working of copper mines in the Lower California Valley ; and if that site proved unsuccessful, it was to be changed to one in the Superior Country, where rich veins were known to abound in the vicinity of the Great Lakes.

Florestan had presented Arundel to a rising young New York lawyer, a man of culture and talent, but above all a successful man. His method was not unlike that of professionals who enter any career for which they think nature has specially gifted them. John Harkins was a lawyer, a criminal lawyer if you will, and he accepted his clients and their cases solely through inspiration. He was one of the ablest men at the New York bar, as far as law-lore goes, but he trusted more to his intuition than even to his practical or theoretical knowledge. Florestan had

explained all this to Arundel, and the lawyer, after having heard every possible side of the story that the latter could give, looked for some moments thoughtfully into Arundel's face, then said briefly :

“Very well, it's settled ; I'll undertake your case. I don't deny,” he continued, “we must trust to luck, but I'm a fatalist—what is to be will be. The evidence you have at present would condemn no mortal man.”

“But if you undertake the case,” interrupted Florestan.

“If I get the money,” said Arundel quickly, “I'll give you half of every dollar of it ; I swear I will. I don't care for money, but I do care for revenge. I'd be willing to die a pauper to get even with that man.”

“I hope you will,” said Harkins, pleasantly, “but nonsense about half the money. You shall give me if I win what any one would give me for an ordinary affair of the kind. Nothing if I lose,—that settles it.”

Some way, even with the scanty materials at hand, Harkins had made out a case ; it had come to trial, and failed. Mr. Vane, still absent in Europe, had been represented by his own counsel, who were not only legally employed, but holding a power of attorney from Mr. Vane, represented that gentleman

even more absolutely. Not only had they conducted their case very cleverly, but they had managed with no little skill to throw such doubts upon the plaintiff's sanity as to elicit from the presiding judge public instruction that Mr. Arundel's mental health be looked after. Mr. Rozen was not present at the trial, but as one of the partners of the firm of Vane and Company, was necessarily represented by counsel. Even Florestan had scarcely expected so quick or decided a turn of affairs, but Harkins, from the instant he heard the exordium of the defence, knew what it would turn upon, and felt that they had lost their case. Although he did not say so at the time, he even feared that worse might happen. The absurd Lunacy Laws which exist in England do not exist in America, no two men can swear out a warrant against a third, and without further evidence confine him in durance vile. Still no one ever knows what to expect from the quips and quibbles of the law, and Harkins having had some experience of the excitability of Arundel's nature, feared were the case to go against him he would make such an exhibition of himself individually, that without the usual prior witnesses he would be dragged then and there to a lunatic asylum. Contrary, however, to all expectation, the plaintiff watched the proceedings with unusual calmness, and

listened to all the inuendoes against his mental condition with impassive demeanour. Only when he heard his Honour's decision, ruling the case out of Court, and dismissing it with costs for plaintiff, he jumped up, and seizing his counsel's arm screamed aloud, "It's a disgrace and a shame; you've beat me now, but I'll get even with him yet." The rapping on the table, and the clerk's cry of "Silence in the Court!" was followed by "Arrest him for contempt of Court," before which latter possibility even Arundel recoiled; before he could utter another word Harkins whispered to him, "For God's sake leave the room; any further excitement might be your ruin."

Arundel never understood how he got away. He only knew that there was a crowd of people around him, and that Florestan, who was waiting at the door, peremptorily waved them all aside, without a word led him to his carriage, and took him home.

The following day the morning papers contained a few lines in the record of the day's "Law Intelligence" to the effect that an unsuccessful suit had been brought against Mr. Vane personally, of Vane and Company, for the recovery of certain rights and properties accruing from an assumed agreement entered into between plaintiff and defendant to find and work copper mines for their mutual benefit,

sharing equally any profits which should be therefrom derived, but there was some doubt as to plaintiff's sanity, the case was ruled out of court, and dismissed with costs against plaintiff. That was about all; and with the exception of two or three floating paragraphs in society journals to the effect that the rich Mr. Vane, who by the way had been an unusually long time absent from New York, had been a victim to the intrigues of a supposed lunatic, whose original idea was probably black mail, cause unknown, although it was supposed there was a woman in the matter, &c. &c., the affair died out without even causing the ordinary nine days' wonder.

That was two months ago. Harkins said little; Arundel seemed a prey to a dumb sort of despair; whilst Florestan was obliged to confess that even he was losing heart. The more he argued against himself, strange to say, the stronger was his inner conviction that Arundel was in the right. He even began to see deeper into the affair, and ideas dawned upon him to which, in connection with the case, he had never previously given a thought. He grew as nervous, unsettled, and anxious as even Arundel himself. Was there more in the background than even he had dreamed? Was Arundel, and perhaps even Rozen himself, the victim of a deeper and a viler plot? The father of the woman he

loved perhaps at that very moment in the clutches of the man Vane. "Vane," he repeated to himself; "it's very odd that I have never seen him since that meeting in the train five years ago. Perhaps it's only a coincidence, but now that I think of it, he has been abroad ever since I promised to help Arundel. I'll give Harkins a hint of that." Then his mind flew off into other channels, and he lost himself in such a maze of speculation, that he grew not only excited but angry, to think that he, with cares enough of his own, should not only mix himself up with other people's affairs, but finish by actually borrowing trouble for others. He had scarcely ever seen it in this light before, but now that he reasoned upon it, it was absolutely too ridiculous, and he determined to have no more of it.

"I will give Arundel money enough to make him comfortable," he said, "and seriously beg him to give up the whole affair for a time at least. I'm a rich man, and if I can marry Enilda Rozen, shall be the happiest man in New York."

Florestan was thinking of all this one June morning. He could not say he had advanced much further with Enilda, but this much he knew—he was not indifferent to her; he would have even gone to Europe on the same steamer, but this affair of Arundel's had prevented him: although, personally,

he could not appear in the case, he knew he was the only friend the latter had in New York, and on the eve of so momentous an occasion had not the heart to leave him in the lurch. But now that all was over, he saw nothing that need detain him another day in Gotham. Even had the suit gone well, he realized that without Enilda the city was unbearable.

With Florestan, to think was to act. He determined to arrange his affairs and depart at once. His mother and Cyril could go with him or remain in America, just as they chose ; he only knew one thing, that the uncertainty and suspense of his position were becoming daily more and more insupportable ; he must know his fate at once. He did not, as foreigners do, go to the father and say, "May I marry your daughter ?"—but being an ordinary straightforward American, he intended to go directly to the daughter, the party with himself most concerned, and say, "Will you be my wife ?"

Florestan had made all his preparations, and this was Saturday morning—the first Saturday in June. He had written to Arundel to say good-bye, and at twelve o'clock on that day was to start for Europe. He had not been so happy for a long time. The prospect of soon seeing Enilda, of being free from this wretched business, and of perhaps months passing

without Arundel prowling in daily to tell how things were going on, was one which he contemplated with positive joy. It was but a little past nine; he had just finished his breakfast, and nearly everything was in readiness for his departure.

He wore a smoking suit, and was just about preparing to dress for his voyage, when the bell rang sharply, and in a few moments Walter announced a visitor. Florestan's intuition said it was Arundel. Although he had written to him to say farewell, something told him that the latter would never allow him to quit America without seeking one final personal interview. It was as he had surmised, and as before, on the occasion of their first meeting in New York, Florestan received him in his bed-room. Arundel came forward with a more hang-dog look than ever. This look exasperated Florestan, and put a gulf between his visitor and himself. He turned abruptly, and addressed him with an irritability which he had never shown in all their previous intercourse. He hastily shook hands with him and said :

“ My good friend, I scarcely expected to see you this morning, and wrote to say good-bye, knowing I had fifty things yet to do, and at the last moment before leaving I should not have an instant to myself.” He looked round the room. “ We start at

twelve ; I must go to Wall Street this morning, and—and you see I'm not even dressed yet."

Arundel glanced up half-humbly ; his eyes had a far-away look in them, and his face wore a vague expression which Florestan remembered to have sometimes seen upon it ; his manner, however, was more composed than usual. He still carried his old umbrella and toyed with it while speaking as he had a habit of doing.

"I don't want to bother you," he said softly, "but you've been so good to me I couldn't let you go without saying good-bye, for who knows—Europe is a long way off—I am old and shattered—and perhaps we may never meet again." Then he laid his umbrella tenderly on the floor, and whipped from his pocket a spotless handkerchief, which he slowly raised in the direction of his eyes.

Florestan was speechless ; this was a turn of affairs he had certainly not expected. Without knowing why, he insensibly softened, and his irritability vanished before Arundel's attitude, as dew vanishes before the morning sun.

"Oh, nonsense !" he cried cheerily. "Never meet again ! Don't say that, Arundel, or you'll make me as blue as an indigo-bag ; the fact is, I'm feeling rather upset myself. I don't deny the fact ; I need a change, and so do you. By the way, why don't you leave

New York? I think it would do you good; you—you know you're a free man now, and can do what you please. Have you seen Harkins?—yes!"

Arundel nodded in the affirmative.

"Well, that's all square then. Just look upon the matter as a loan, and pay me back whenever you like; for sooner or later of course the case must come up again, but I beg of you, let it rest now for a good year to come."

Arundel still did not move.

"Come," said Florestan, kindly placing his hand on his shoulder, "don't take it to heart so; you're no worse off now than you were six months ago. You know I'm your friend, and I'll stand by you through thick and thin; but there is absolutely nothing more to be done at present, and I cannot think of taking any more steps in the matter now. It must rest."

Arundel drew his handkerchief away from his eyes. "It's true," he murmured. "We can do no more; every effort has been exhausted. You don't know," he said, with a still faltering voice, "what it was to me to lose that lawsuit. I never had a son, but you—I love you as if you were one of my own, and your going away just breaks me all up." He smiled faintly. "I—I think I take it more to heart than anything else that ever happened to me in the whole course of my life. Besides, what will I do with myself?

I used to potter in here constantly. When you're gone where shall I spend my time?"

"My poor Arundel," said Florestan laughing, "you remind me of a Frenchman who had been paying daily court to a woman for ten years. At last a friend advised him to marry her. 'Marry her,' he said. 'Good heavens! where shall I spend my evenings?'"

"It's all very well for you," said Arundel, "to be smiling and gay; you—you—why your life seems an endless panorama of fair scenes, bright hopes, and pleasant prospects; but I—what have I to look forward to? And to think with it all that when I look back on my life I've never been anything but an honest man. I've never done any one a turn that wasn't a good one; and yet—and yet, Mr. Florestan, with the single exception of having met you, I've been down on my luck ever since I was born."

"Well, suppose you have," said Florestan, cheerfully; "many a man has been innocently condemned to death, and his innocence never discovered until too late."

"Yes," interrupted Arundel; "but the treatment I've had from the world has been enough to have made an out and out villain of me."

Florestan looked at him steadily. "You are wrong there, Arundel. It may sound to you like a Sunday

school catechism, and—I'm a man of the world—but, believe me, men and women must be good for their own sakes, for the inherent good there is in them, not for the rewards, either good or bad, which may come after. I'm not given to boasting, but I say, no circumstances in life could ever make a villain out of me. And now, I must dress. You don't mind? Don't disturb yourself; I'll just go on whilst you're here. Gad, it's after ten, and I have no time to lose. Make yourself at home. Smoke if you want to. Have some breakfast? Ring for anything you like. There are the morning papers. I'll be back in a minute."

Florestan disappeared into the dressing-room, but kept up a constant going backwards and forwards during the next few moments. Arundel sat quietly in a chair; he neither smoked, took breakfast, nor read the papers; he merely folded his hands placidly across his knees, and seemed wrapped in the deepest of deep meditation.

At last minor preparations were finished, and Florestan came cheerfully forth. He had donned a travelling-suit of homespun, common enough in England, but rather the contrary in America; he was just drawing on his coat, and putting his left arm through its armhole in most vigorous fashion. He picked up his fob and watch, and put them on,

then he picked up a pocket-book which had been lying beside them, ran his eye hastily over the contents, and slipped it into the breast of his coat; he slapped his chest here and there, and finished by slapping his pockets, saying with an air of excessive relief:

“At last everything is ready. Well, Arundel, old chap, I hate to say good-bye, but I think I must be going;—why, what’s the matter?” Florestan stopped abruptly, for Arundel was gazing at him with an indescribable look, and one slender finger was pointed towards him.

“That suit of clothes,” he gasped; “it’s very odd, they rake up strange memories in me. I seem to have seen them somewhere; I know I had a suit just like them once.”

“Ah,” said Florestan thinking, “I must get out of this; I must get away. Is he going off again? Poor devil, I hate to leave him, and yet—” But whilst he walked up and down the room, scrutinizing a thing here, examining another there, giving that indiscriminate last look around habitual to the human race on the eve of a long absence from home, he only echoed idly enough:

“Ah, a suit like this,” and added, scarcely knowing what to add, “what has become of it now?”

“Ah,” screamed Arundel, jumping up and raving

round like a madman. "What has become of it? I know now. Everything is clear; that suit of clothes brings it all back to me. I remember everything, Ah! thank God, I'm saved—it has all come back to me at last."

"He's mad," thought Florestan; "I'll ring for Walter;" and he went towards the bell.

Arundel understood his movement.

"Oh, I can't blame you, but don't ring, for God's sake. I'm not mad—I'm not losing my reason; on the contrary, everything has come back to me—all those long months I passed in the hospital. Since then I had forgotten almost everything that had happened. I watched you dressing; the pantaloons first struck me, then the vest, and when I saw you drawing on the coat I wasn't here, Mr. Florestan, but I was back in San Francisco, reading that villain's letters, and locking them up in my trunk so that no one should get hold of them. Can't you see? Can't you see it all? The clothes and letters are together, and both,—and both, so help me Heaven—are still in that trunk in San Francisco."

Florestan made a movement as if to interrupt him.

"Don't stop me," he cried—"the trunk—let me see;"—he looked steadily at Florestan's travelling-suit, as if to compel from those nondescript threads

some hint, some recollection, which could throw a strong light upon memory's hidden recesses. "Ah," he cried, throwing his arms round Florestan's neck, "now I remember all. The trunk is still in San Francisco, at a boarding-house. The landlady kept it because I couldn't pay my bill the last time I went to the hospital, and in that trunk, I swear to you, are letters and proofs, any one of which would criminate Vane a thousand times over."

"Arundel," said Florestan, putting the latter away from him sternly, "look me in the face: are you telling me the truth or not? I'll stand no more trifling."

"As God hears me," said Arundel slowly, "I am telling you the truth."

"Very well; to prove that I believe you, I'll give up going to Europe."

Arundel started forward. "Can you mean it?" he gasped.

Florestan rang the bell; his valet appeared.

"My plans are changed," he said, "I have indefinitely postponed my departure for Europe. Telegraph at once to the steamer."

"Now, Mr. Arundel," he said, when Walter had disappeared, "you're either mad, or this, if true, is one of the most extraordinary coincidences it has ever been my lot to experience. Before, you were

anxious; now I am determined to see this thing through. Tell me as quickly as you can all about that trunk, and the letters, the boarding-house keeper, and where she is—if she's alive."

Arundel began: "She was alive two years ago. Her name is Symons, and she lives in Montgomery Street, San Francisco, number—number 53. I believe it is 53. When I went away I couldn't pay her; that is, when I was taken away, you know."

Whilst Arundel was speaking Florestan was rapidly making notes. "Go on," he said briefly; Arundel continued :

"Miss Symons was real good to me; she wouldn't have kept 'em, but it was more 'to take care of 'em like,' she said. 'You'll find 'em safe when you come after 'em again, Mr. Arundel; even if you can't pay all the money, you'll give me what you can.'"

"Did you owe her much?"

"Well, yes; it was rather a large bill—fourteen hundred dollars. You see I was there off and on for nearly two years; but she'll never expect me to give her that."

Florestan looked up. "Is that all?" he said.

"That's all."

Florestan rose abruptly. "Now come with me," he said. "We're going to the Telegraph Office, and we won't leave it till we find out about this affair;

at least, if Miss Symons is in San Francisco she'll be found. I'll just go and change my clothes first."

"Stop! Don't change them; they are going to bring me luck."

"Nonsense!" laughed Florestan. "If they do I'll have them framed, glazed, and hung where I can always look at them; but if you believe in a little thing like that I won't change them. Come, we must be off at once."

"And if we don't find her?" said Arundel hoarsely.

"If she's alive we'll find her: now for the Union Telegraph. We must go to the down town office, and I'll get my special wire."

On the way there Arundel talked freely to Florestan, while the latter took copious notes. Poor Arundel! He seemed another man. In all the months of their intercourse Florestan had never known him so expansive, so easy, nor yet so rational; the cobwebs seemed lifted from his brain, and his mind as free as his speech was lucid. How strange it is that the powerful mental mechanism of human intelligence may be swung on its pivot through the most trivial of material circumstances! The sight of a once familiar suit of homespun had awakened the dormant memories of years, had stirred the torpidity of this enfeebled brain; had done more towards

restoring this intellect to its former state, than years of hydropathy, and “all the king’s doctors, and all the king’s men.”

After half-an-hour’s driving they reached the down town Telegraph Office. Florestan had a few words with the chief director, and was soon installed at a table.”

“The first message,” he said to Arundel, “is to the Chief of Police in San Francisco, and the next to an agent of mine, Harry Dodge, who will act with him.” Then Florestan began to write.

“Stop!” said Arundel. “Just to humour me, let me send off that first telegram; I want you to see how steady I am.”

“Very well; as you will—here’s the first blank?” and he almost laughed aloud as he pushed it towards him.

Florestan had not felt so light-hearted for days; and although Enilda never left his mind, on this momentous morning, if he saw her at all, it was only in a dreamy sort of way. Now and then an angel-like vision, fair and soft as a cloud in a summer sky, flitted before him and seemed to say, “I am ever near you; ever thinking of you; ever protecting you.”

Scarcely half-an-hour had passed when the first return message came.

“As I expected,” read Florestan:

“Symons moved—looking her up. All right.

“(Signed) DODGE.”

An hour passed, and the “grams” began to pour in thick and fast; luncheon hour came and went, hundreds of people rushed into the office to send a hasty “wire,” and as hastily rushed out again, but no one noticed two quiet figures busily engaged in a distant corner. Two o’clock came, half-past two, and at a quarter before three a clerk wrote out word by word the longest of all previous messages. Arundel, grown feverish with impatience, stretched out his hand towards the paper.

“No,” said Florestan, drawing it away. “You sent the first, let me have the pleasure of reading the last,” and he took the telegram slowly in his hands.

“Listen, Arundel,” he said. “Americans are right, never to say die. I guess Miss Symons is the most startled boarding-house-keeper that San Francisco or any other town has seen for years. He read:

“Symons paid in full. Trunk, contents, letters absolutely as left by Arundel, sealed and registered, leaves Wells Fargo Express next train New York. Last message.

“DODGE.”

“Take it—read it,” said Florestan.

Arundel dazed, turning paler and paler, without looking at the paper clutched it in his fingers.

“At last,” he cried. “Mr. Florestan, you see what even your wish to help me has done. When I was a lad at school I used to read in Emerson: ‘When a god wishes to ride, any chip or pebble will bud and shoot out winged feet and serve him for a horse.’ I didn’t know what it meant then, but I know now.”

“I’m very hungry,” said Florestan, laughing. “We’ll slip over the way into ‘Del’s’ down town restaurant and get some luncheon. You shall take these to Harkins yourself, and tell him the whole story. When the trunk arrives, and I see every paper safe in your hands, I shall take the next steamer to Europe. Is it agreed? But before I go I shall seriously consider dressing every boy and girl in the New York public schools in homespun, and setting them to study Emerson.”





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